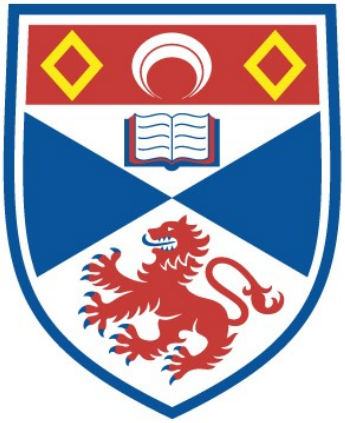
ASPECTS OF ARMINIANISM IN SCOTLAND

Michiel Casparus Kitshoff

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of MTh
at the
University of St Andrews



1967

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A S P E C T S O F A R M I N I A N I S M

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S C O T L A N D

being

A THESIS PRESENTED
TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. ANDREWS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF THEOLOGY

by

MICHIEL C. KITSHOFF

B.A.(Cape Town), B.A. HONS. (Stellenbosch), Th.Drs. (Amsterdam)

SEPTEMBER, 1967.

CERTIFICATE

I certify that Michiel Casparus Kitshoff has spent four terms at Research Work in St. Mary's College in the University of St. Andrews, that he has fulfilled the conditions of Ordinance No. 61 (St. Andrews), and that he is qualified to submit the accompanying Thesis in application for the degree of Master of Theology.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the following thesis is based on the results of research carried out by me, that the thesis is my own composition, and that it has not previously been presented for a higher degree.

15th September, 1967.
St. Andrews.

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PREFACE

Although the word Arminianism was very familiar in seventeenth and eighteenth century Scotland, a comprehensive study assessing the significance of this word to the Scots, and tracing the rise and progress of Arminianism in Scotland is still lacking. In many of the numerous books on the ecclesiastical history of Scotland, brief references are made to Arminianism, but usually in such a way as to consider it a very minor factor in the history of the Churches of Scotland.

There are, however, a few writings which pay more attention to Scotland's relationship to Arminianism. In 1932 an article covering twelve pages, entitled "Arminianism in Scotland", appeared.[1] In this article the author gave a general outline of some of the salient features of Arminianism in Scotland. In a study on Scotland's religious life during the seventeenth century, published in 1937, the same author made various references to Scotland's attitude towards Arminianism.[2] A short article written by a Unitarian minister a few years ago, reviewed what he called, "the Arminian and Universalist challenge to

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1. G.D. Henderson, "Arminianism in Scotland", London Quarterly Review, October, 1932, pp. 493-504.
2. G.D. Henderson, Religious Life in Seventeenth-Century Scotland (London, 1937), index.

Calvinism in Scotland."[1] His five-page article, however, concentrated chiefly on the progress of universalism in Scotland.

In view of this meagre harvest of writings on Arminianism in Scotland, the study contained in the following pages is an attempt to fill a small part of the hiatus in Scotland's church history.

In the general set-up and division of the chapters, the topical approach was followed. There are various disadvantages inherent to this kind of approach. The first is that it gives the work a fragmentary character. This is due to the fact that a system of division based on outstanding events or prominent persons, does not always follow the chronological lines of history, and thus results in an intermittent narrative. Another disadvantage is that there are always certain items which cannot easily be brought under one of these headings, but which are at the same time not broad or important enough to justify a separate division.

In this study an attempt was made to overcome these difficulties by constructing the subject divisions within a chronological framework, and thereby trying to relate Arminianism chronologically to the main ecclesiastical events.

This study covers only the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries because after the eighteenth century Arminianism exerted very little

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1. L.B. Short, "The Challenge to Scottish Calvinism: (2) The Arminian-Universalist Challenge", The Hibbert Journal, Vol. 62, 1963-4, p. 87.

new influence, and excited very little interest in Scotland. The theological trends of the nineteenth century were virtually an intensified extension of eighteenth century currents.

Finally, it should be pointed out that the following discussion of Arminianism in Scotland does not purport to be exhaustive. In fact, it is very incomplete because, as the title indicates, only some aspects of Arminianism connected with certain persons and events are coming under observation.

I

SCOTLAND ENCOUNTERS ARMINIANISM

The ecclesiastical and dogmatical movements on the Continent during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries affected Scotland profoundly.[1] It is said that "when Scots Reformers looked for the Gospel, they turned to Wittenberg; when they thought of re-shaping their doctrine and polity, they turned to Geneva,"[2] and, it may be added, when Scotsmen desired a seat of theological learning, they turned to France. During the seventeenth century when Germany, Switzerland, and France were declining in theological splendour, it was the Universities of the Low Countries which radiated the Reformed theology to Scotland.

From Germany the reformative spirit entered Scotland, and Switzerland supplied the spark and fuel for the blazing and almost consuming fire of the Reformation by John Knox and his successors. Yet not long after this, more than one ardent Scots scholar in France became aware of a change of theological climate. It was from there that a learned and celebrated Scot returned to his country to teach a doctrine suspected by some of his compatriots as compatible with Arminianism. At the same time when exiled Scots ministers of the Gospel found a welcome haven of rest in the Netherlands, Scotland could not escape the effects of the unrest caused by the storm of the Arminian controversy in the Low Countries.

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1. For a fairly recent work on the influences which proceeded from the Continent, see A.L. Drummond, The Kirk and the Continent (Edinburgh, 1956).

2. Ibid., p. 53.

To outline some of the influences from the Continent prior to the Synod of Dort, and the impression thereof on the Church of Scotland, brief references to Germany, Switzerland, France, and the Netherlands will suffice.

Reformative impetus from Germany.

In the early stages of the Reformation in Scotland, it was to Wittenberg and Martin Luther that the leaders looked. Through the literature that poured from the German presses and through personal contacts the truths of the rediscovered Gospel created and guided the reforming impulses. An Act passed by the Parliament of Scotland in 1525 prohibiting the entering of books containing the "damnable opinions of heresy" as disseminated by "the heretic Luther and his disciples" lifted the German Reformer's name out of obscurity and caused it to be proclaimed in all ports and burghs of the realm.[1]

Scottish students established personal contacts with the Reformers in Germany. Patrick Hamilton ex-student of Paris, Louvain, and St. Andrews visited Wittenberg and studied at Marburg.[2] In 1527 he returned to Scotland, "a true disciple of his master. He had gripped the essentials of Luther's teaching - or rather, the Gospel at the heart of the Reformation had gripped him - with an intensity which made him

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1. The Acts of the Parliament of Scotland, 1424-1567, Vol. II, 1814, p. 295.

2. J.P. Lawson, Life of Patrick Hamilton, (Edinburgh, 1828).

re-echo the sola fides justificat in a manner unequalled in his native land, and not surpassed even in the immediate circle of Luther himself."[1]

In his native country he was found "infamed with heresy, disputing and maintaining divers heresies of Martin Luther and his followers".[2] On 29th February, 1528, he died on the stake in St. Andrews - at that time the Vatican of Scotland - a noble martyr to a noble cause.

Among the many foreign students attracted to Wittenberg, twenty Scots enrolled between 1585 and 1612.[3] William Forbes who in 1634 became the first bishop of Edinburgh had studied there in 1608. His theology, seen from a Calvinist point of view, was definitely liberal, but it is very improbable that this was due to his training received in Germany.[4]

The most famous medieval University to become Reformed was Heidelberg. It was there that John Cameron, who became Divinity Professor in the University of Glasgow in 1622, had matriculated fifteen years earlier. In 1613 John Forbes of Corse completed his studies in the same cultured city of Reformed witness.[5]

Three years after the Scots Confession of 1560, the Heidelberg Catechism appeared.[6] It is not excessive praise when it is said that

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1. H. Watt, "Hamilton's Interpretation of Luther," Patrick Hamilton, First Scottish Martyr of the Reformation, ed. A. Cameron (Edinburgh, 1929), p. 34.
2. P. Lorimer, Patrick Hamilton (Edinburgh, 1857), p. 149.
3. Drummond, op. cit., p. 54.
4. Infra Chapter IV.
5. W.C. Taylor, "Scottish Students in Heidelberg, 1386-1662", The Scottish Historical Review (Glasgow, 1908), pp. 67-75.
6. P. Schaff, The Creeds of Christendom with a History and Critical Notes (New York, 1877), Vol. I, pp. 529-554; Vol. III, pp. 307-355.

"the Catechism is a work of religious enthusiasm based on solid theological learning, and directed by excellent judgment. It is baptized with the pentecostal fire of the great Reformation, yet remarkably free from the polemic zeal and intolerance which characterized that wonderfully excited period."[1]

The Heidelberg Catechism which is considered by the same scholar as "by far the richest and deepest in Church history next to the age of Christ,"[2] does not attempt to define the deep mysteries of God and His Kingdom. On "double predestination", "eternal decree of reprobation", and "limited atonement", all theological concepts which were keeping the Church in commotion for many decades, the Catechism is significantly silent.

The Heidelberg Catechism found its way over to Scotland, and in 1591 an English edition appeared at Edinburgh, issued by public authority for use in Scotland.[3] Several versions of the Catechism circulated in Scotland; the Church did not seem to have kept to a particular one.[4] It cannot be doubted that the Heidelberg Catechism, which was repeatedly bound up with the Psalm Book and Knox's Book of Common Order, circulated in many Scottish homes and was treasured in many Scottish hearts.

There is still another important aspect of the German influence to be mentioned. The Wedderburn brothers of Dundee gave to the reforming

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1. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 542.
2. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 542.
3. A Collection of Confessions of Faith . . . of Publick Authority in the Church of Scotland, ed. W. Dunlop (Edinburgh, 1722), Vol. II, p. 273.
4. H. Bonar, Catechisms of the Scottish Reformed Churches, (London, 1866), p. 171.

spirit in Scotland a new voice by publishing The Gude and Godlie Ballatis.[1] This book contained twenty-four metrical versions of the Psalms and a large number of spiritual songs, nearly all founded on German originals.[2] An able historian of the seventeenth century recorded that John, one of the Wedderburn brothers, "departed to Almaine, where he heard Luther and Melancton and became very fervent and zealous. He translated many of Luther's dytements into Scotish meeter, and the Psalmes of David."[3] The Wedderburns' book, also known as the "Dundie Psalms" was published in or before 1546, and there is evidence enough to suggest that even long after this, these Psalms and Songs were widely sung in Scotland.[4]

After the sixteenth century the influence of Germany and Luther on the Church of Scotland was of minor importance. Moreover, it is held that "about 1560, the Scottish Reformers found in the name of Luther an obstacle rather than an inspiration."[5] The sacramentarian controversy is offered as the main reason for the recession of Luther's influence.

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1. A.F. Mitchell, The Wedderburns and their Work (Edinburgh, 1867); C. Christie, The Influence of Letters on the Scottish Reformation (Edinburgh, 1908), pp. 133-209.
2. Patrick, "The Music of the Scottish Church", Records of Scottish Church History Society (infra abbreviated: R.S.C.H.S.), (Glasgow, 1935), Vol. V, p. 6.
3. D. Calderwood, The History of the Kirk of Scotland (Edinburgh, 1842), Vol. I, p. 143.
4. Patrick, op. cit., p. 6.
5. H. Watt, "The Influence of Martin Luther on Scottish Religion in the Eighteenth Century", R.S.C.H.S. (Glasgow, 1938), Vol. VI, p. 148.

Only in the eighteenth century through the controversial book, The Marrow of Modern Divinity, did Luther's name and teachings reappear in Scotland.[1]

Calvinistic contribution from Switzerland.

The continental wandering of Scottish students in search of learning led them to almost every university. Notable among them were those who took a leading part in effecting the Reformation and establishing Protestantism in Scotland. The General Assembly of the Scottish Church recognized the value of external contact, and in 1575 the opinion was expressed that provision should be made for young men of ability to be sent by the Church to foreign universities for further education.[2]

From the earliest days of the Reformation, the Protestant cities of Switzerland attracted many Scots. George Wishart, who was driven into exile by the Six Articles of Henry VIII, resorted to Basel and Zurich where he came into contact with the Swiss Reformers, whose Confession, the First Helvetic, he adopted. A few years after he had returned to his native land, he was seized and handed over to Archbishop Beaton who condemned him as a heretic. Like Patrick Hamilton, he was burnt at the stake at St. Andrews in 1546.[3]

The first Scottish student since the Reformation to enroll at

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1. Ibid., pp. 150-160.
2. The Book of the Universall Kirk of Scotland, ed. A. Peterkin (Edinburgh, 1839), p. 150.
3. The Works of John Knox, ed. D. Laing (Edinburgh, 1895), Vol. I, pp. 125-171, 534-537.

the University of Basel in 1556 was a former student of John Knox, Alexander Cockburn.[1] It is needless to name all who studied at this Swiss University, but reference must be made to Robert Howie who, in the field of theological studies, was considered as the most outstanding of the ten Scottish students who matriculated at the University of Basel in the second half of the sixteenth century.[2]

Robert Howie studied at Rostock and Herborn where, at the latter University, one of his professors was Caspar Olevianus, who together with Zacharias Ursinus, was responsible for the appearance of the Heidelberg Catechism. Having distinguished himself at the University of Basel from 1588 to 1591, Howie returned to Scotland to become the first principal of Marischal College, Aberdeen. In later years he succeeded Andrew Melville in St. Mary's College, St. Andrews, and served there as principal for about thirty years.[3]

However powerful the various continental influences were, perhaps none proved themselves deeper and more permanent than the centrifugal forces of Geneva. The foremost and most fervent of the Scottish Reformers was John Knox who became a close friend of John Calvin in

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1. Die Matrikel der Universität Basel, reissued by H.G. Wackernagel, (Basel, 1956), Vol. XI, p. 95; The Works of John Knox, Vol. I, p. 185.
2. Letters of John Johnston c. 1565-1611 and Robert Howie c. 1565 - c. 1645, ed. J.K. Cameron (Edinburgh, 1963), p. xiiv.
3. Ibid., pp. xiii-lxxiv.

Geneva. No doubt "he was a Protestant and a Reformer before he saw the city, but when he left it, he was an ardent Calvinist."[1]

The influence of Geneva manifested itself in various ways. In 1560 the Scottish Parliament demanded a statement of the doctrine of the Reformation. Under Knox's guidance a Confession of Faith was swiftly produced. This Confession borrowed from Calvin's Institutions at almost every point. The passage on the doctrine of election and the section on justification are little less than quotations from Calvin's works.[2]

The Bible which came to be used in Scotland at the Reformation was the "Geneva version". This was a revision of William Tyndale's translation carried out at Geneva by a group of exiles who had fled to the Swiss city for safety.[3] This Bible appeared in 1560 and contained numerous marginal notes, "unmistakably evangelical, sublimely predestinarian, conspicuously anti-papal and slyly democratic."[4]

The congregational worship of the reforming church in Scotland took as model the form used by the English congregation in Geneva. It was published there in 1556 under the title, The Form of Prayers and

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1. H.Y. Reyburn, "Calvin and Scotland", R.S.C.H.S. (Edinburgh, 1926), Vol. I, p. 210.
2. Schaff, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 680-685, Vol. III, pp. 437-479.
3. G.A.F. Knight, "The Bible in Scotland after the Reformation", R.S.C. H.S. (Glasgow, 1935), Vol. V, p. 214.
4. A. Edgar, The Bibles of England (London, 1888), p. 151.

Ministration of the Sacraments, etc., used in the English Congregation at Geneva, and approved by the famous and learned and godly man John Calvin. Knox had brought this form with him and this Book of Common Order was in use till William Laud tried to force another liturgy on the Scottish Church.[1]

From the very beginning the Scottish church was a singing church. There is good reason for believing that Ninian, one of the first founders of the church, "introduced early in the fifth century the practice of continuous praise - laus perennis - sung by relays of monks".[2] Columba, who established the Iona community in the sixth century, compiled, according to his biographer, the first Scottish hymnbook.[3] The Wedderburns' book of Psalms and Songs, already mentioned above, was another achievement in religious praise, only to be overshadowed by the Genevan Psalm Book.

The English congregation in Geneva used a collection of fifty-one metrical Psalms, the fruit of the work of Thomas Sternhold, John Hopkins and William Whittingham.[4] This collection is really the parent book of the Scottish Psalmody. The General Assembly appointed John Craig and others to revise the Genevan Psalm Book and to compile something suited to the needs of the Scottish church. The result of

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1. Reyburn, op. cit., p. 213.
2. Patrick, op. cit., p. 1.
3. Ibid., p. 1.
4. W. Cowan, "The Scottish Reformation Psalmody", R.S.C.H.S., (Edinburgh, 1926), Vol. I, p. 33.

these labours was approved in December 1564.[1]

With the Psalms, the church in Scotland took over some of the tunes which Calvin secured for his own congregation. No less than thirty-two tunes found their way from the Genevan Psalter to the Scottish Psalter. All the attempts to fit English verses to the French tunes and the intricate metres of the French poems, cannot be described as successful. Many adaptations necessarily followed so that as far as Scottish church music is concerned there are only three French psalm-tunes still familiar to the ear.[2]

The influence of Geneva became also visible with regard to church government. Like Calvin, Knox had no rooted objections to episcopacy.[3] They had no earnest desire to remove the episcopal order, but when it proved itself hostile to the Reformation, the Reformers, out of necessity, had to clear the encumbrance away.[4] Knox was acquainted with the details of John a Lasco's system of church government, as well as with that of Geneva, and it was natural for Scotland to fall into line.[5] Knox could very well be regarded as the hero of Scottish Protestantism, but not of Scottish Presbyterianism. It was only in the time of his

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1. Ibid., p. 35.
2. A.G. Gilchrist, "Psalm - versions and French Tunes in the Scottish Psalter of 1564", R.S.C.H.S. (Glasgow, 1935), Vol. V, p. 208.
3. Reyburn, op. cit., p. 214.
4. C.L. Warr, The Presbyterian Tradition, (London, 1933), p. 289.
5. G.D. Henderson, The Claims of the Church of Scotland (London, 1951), p. 84.

successors that presbyterianism came to be regarded as jus divinum and came to be insisted upon.[1]

Not only the reformation spirit of Geneva appeared in Scotland but also the spirit of intolerance. To ascribe this intolerance, directed towards other theological or ecclesiastical opinions, solely to the Genevan Calvinism would be grossly unfair and inexcusably unhistorical. Such a fallacious view is expressed in the following statement:

> "If Calvin had realised that it is not possible for any one man, or group of men, to see all sides of truth, he might have taught Geneva and Scotland to insist on love, joy, peace, gentleness, compassion, and self-sacrifice for others as essential elements in Christian character; Scottish morality might not have lagged behind its theology as it has done; and we might have been spared that splitting of the Scottish Church into fragments on points of doctrine, and even of political connection which is less of its glory than of its shame."2

The fact is that during the sixteenth and the greater part of the seventeenth century complete religious liberty and comprehensive doctrinal and ecclesiastical tolerance were rarely found. Freedom of thought and practice in religious matters did not prevail in Geneva, nor in Basel, nor in France, nor in Scotland, nor among Calvinists, nor among Lutherans and Roman Catholics.[3] Without denying the "defects" to be found in Calvinism, it cannot be said that the above criticism of Calvin and Calvinism applies solely to Calvin and Calvinism. The same

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1. Warr, op. cit., p. 314.
2. Reyburn, op. cit., p. 216.
3. F. Ruffini, Religious Liberty (trans. J.P. Heyes, London, 1912).

shortcomings, the same self-assuredness, the same splittings can be found in churches not so strongly or not at all influenced by Calvinism as the Scottish church.

In 1559 another source of influence was opened in Geneva. In that year Calvin founded his Academy which heralded a new phase in the progress of Calvinism.[1] Students from many countries were attracted there by the name and fame of John Calvin and Theodore Beza. Under these circumstances the wandering Scots were sure to be found there, not only as students but also as teachers.[2]

Andrew Melville,[3] who in some respects can be called the successor of John Knox in Scotland, found his footsteps guided to Geneva. He started teaching there in 1569. Like so many other scholars of his time, he was both teacher and student. He attended regularly the lectures of Beza and received high praise from his master. In 1574 Scotland beseeched him to return to take up the trowel and sword fallen from the hands of John Knox.

Melville, described as "second to none in learning and hardly second to Knox in power and influence"[4] was no writer of voluminous books. On the contrary, he left only one theological treatise, a short

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1. C. Borgeaud, Histoire de l'Universite de Geneve, Vol. I, L'Academie de Calvin, 1559-1798 (Geneva, 1900).
2. R.G. Philip, "Scottish Scholars at Geneva, 1559-1650", R.S.C.H.S. (Glasgow, 1938), Vol. VI, pp. 216-231.
3. T. McCrie, Life of Andrew Melville, 2 Vols. (Edinburgh, 1819).
4. J. Walker, The Theology and Theologians of Scotland (Edinburgh, 1872), p. 2.

commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. Without minimizing Melville's labour in establishing protestantism by means of his preaching and teaching, he will be remembered for his efforts in establishing presbyterianism in Scotland. It is perhaps not incorrect to say that Melville was "the greatest figure in the history of Scottish Presbyterianism."[1] He did not share the silence of John Knox on that issue, but he was one of the first to attack episcopacy and to maintain the parity of ministers. In this he did not receive undivided support.[2] His views were questioned by many. To James VI presbyterianism came to be anathema because its policy ran counter to his whole conception of kingship, and because he saw presbyterianism as a stumbling block on the road towards unification of England and Scotland.[3]

It seems correct to say that "as for the people, so long as their traditional form of worship was not interfered with, they did not care one way or another whether there were bishops in the Kirk or not."[4] Even in 1638 when bishops were ejected and prelacy was rejected, modified episcopacy still had its supporters. At the General Assembly of 1638, Robert Baillie declined to abjure episcopacy, and he noted in his Journal that the larger part of the clergy seemed to favour prelacy.[5]

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1. Warr, op. cit., p. 314.
2. W. Mathieson, Politics and Religion in Scotland, (Glasgow, 1902), Vol. I, p. 288; D. Calderwood, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 156-162.
3. G. Donaldson, Scotland : James V to James VII (Edinburgh, 1965).
4. Warr, op. cit., p. 310.
5. R. Baillie, Letters and Journals, (Edinburgh, 1841), Vol. I, p. 121.

The fear of Rome and the aversion to Arminianism were two of the many factors in the political, social, and religious situation which caused the downfall of episcopacy in Scotland.

While Andrew Melville was principal of St. Mary's College in St. Andrews (1581-1608), the waves caused by the theological disputes in Holland, reached the shores of Scotland. These were occasioned by the opinions of Jacob Arminius on the origin of moral evil, predestination, free-will and grace. These opinions were considered to be novel and deviating from the accepted doctrine.

In the year 1607 Melville received a letter from Sibrandus Lubbertus, Professor of Divinity in Franeker, giving him an account of the sentiments of the innovator and requesting Melville's opinion. This was followed by a letter from Arminius himself in which he complained that Lubbertus had misrepresented him to foreign divines, whereupon he entered into defence of his own position.[1]

From this time on Scotland and its theologians could not remain passive spectators to the theological conflict, and in France orthodox Scottish theologians were first called to resist the more liberal tendencies.

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1. McCrie, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 342.

Liberal tendencies in France.

The relations between Scotland and France dated from times long before the Reformation.[1] Not only traders crossed the sea to exchange merchandise, but more than one member of the royal house sailed the ocean between Scotland and France for the purpose of marriage. The Treaty of Rouen, signed in the year when Martin Luther nailed his ninety-five theses to the door in Wittenberg, was the high-water mark of mutual confidence between these two countries.[2] The surge of the Reformation and the advance of Calvinism generated new forces which became directed towards Scotland.

Seven Protestant Academies were founded during the second half of the sixteenth and in the beginning of the seventeenth century. Of importance were the Academies of Orthez, established by the mother of Henry of Navarre in 1561, Montauban founded in 1597, Saumur set up in 1599, and Sedan which dated from 1603.[3] Protestant Scotsmen frequented these centres of learning while the Scots Catholics found themselves more at home in places such as Douai and Paris.[4]

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1. F. Michel, Les Ecossais en France (London, 1862); A.L. Drummond, op. cit., pp. 26-52; A. Fleming, Huguenot Influence in Scotland (Glasgow, 1953).
2. Fleming, op. cit., p. 14.
3. Drummond, op. cit., p. 27.
4. J.A. Pannier, "Quelques Ecossais Professeurs et Etudiants a Paris, Du 12^{e} au 17^{e} Siecle", R.S.C.H.S. (Edinburgh, 1932), Vol. IV, pp.93-106.

In 1611 Andrew Melville was released from confinement in the Tower of London enabling him to accept the Divinity Chair at the Academy of Sedan.[1] At Sedan he found himself a colleague of Daniel Tilenus, in the opinion of the biographer of Melville, "a man of talents, but haughty and remorse" and as far as theology was concerned, "a keen stickler for the peculiar tenet of Piscator."[2] About one third of the staff were Scots of whom several were his old students from St. Andrews.[3]

At the time of Melville's coming to Sedan, grave concern was expressed regarding a new trend in theology. M. du Moulin writing in 1611 to Robert Boyd of Trochrigg, Scotland, at that time professor at Saumur, vented his anxiety as follows:

> The youth that come from their country hath particular need to be well instructed as to the articles of Predestination, Free-will and the Perseverance of the Saints, since many extravagancys as to these points are fast running into the places they belong to. 4

Sedan, described as "a safe centre for the nurture of the Reformed Church,"[5] did not escape the subtle influence of this new tendency.

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1. McCrie, op. cit., pp. 417ff.
2. Ibid., p. 429.
3. Drummond, op. cit., p. 36.
4. R. Wodrow, Collections upon the Lives of the Reformers (Glasgow, 1848), Vol. II, Part I, p. 102.
5. Drummond, op. cit., p. 36.

It was at Sedan that Andrew Melville encountered what he regarded as unorthodox doctrine. Among his students he found several "infected with Arminianism."[1] Tilenus was held responsible for at least the greater part of the "infection". Robert Wodrow reflecting on "the beginning and rise of the innovations in doctrine now creeping into the pure Church of France", put the blame on Tilenus who "laid the foundation of what favoured Arminius Doctrine."[2]

A scholar at Sedan, writing to the same Robert Boyd on 20th November, 1611, gave a short account of the relations between the two colleagues, Melville and Tilenus.[3] He reported that all their ordinary discourses concerned three points, namely justification, reprobation, and Romans VII. On justification Melville and Tilenus entertained much the same opinions, but held divergent views on the other two points. Where Melville maintained the absolute decree of reprobation, Tilenus rejected it; Melville interpreted the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans as referring to the regenerate but Tilenus understood it as concerning the unregenerate. The correspondent continued: "Mr. Melvin hath handled the subject directly in his last 3 lessons and has defended it against all that verge towards Arminianisme . . .

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1. McCrie, op. cit., p. 444.
2. R. Wodrow, op. cit., p. 106.
3. Ibid., pp. 104-106.

These noveltys certainly prognosticat evil."[1]

This letter not only indicated the different theological opinions prevalent at Sedan, but also that seven years before the Synod of Dort, orthodox theology in France saw in the teachings of Arminius an approaching danger against which should be guarded. It can be accepted that Melville shared this concern, and perhaps McCrie's depiction of Melville as the champion and guardian of student orthodoxy against the advancing Arminianism, is not exaggerated.[2]

The account of the conflict between Melville and Tilenus as given by McCrie was questioned by a scholar who had strong presumptions against any rupture between the two divines.[3] The difference in theological views, however, cannot be denied. The fact that after the Synod of Dort, Tilenus came out boldly for the Arminian side,[4] suggests that the general anxiety concerning the notions of Tilenus was not unsubstantiated and that Melville's refutation was not a fight against wind-mills. This comprehendable concern of Melville does not alter the fact that to the modern man the differences appear slight and do not seem to explain the hostility that separated these two figures.

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1. Ibid., p. 105.
2. McCrie, op. cit., p. 444.
3. McCrie, op. cit., p. 444; cf. M.P. Mellon, Revue Chrétienne, (Paris, 1907), p. 205.
4. H.M.B. Reid, The Divinity Professors in the University of Glasgow, 1640-1903 (Glasgow, 1905) p. 78.

Andrew Melville was one of the first Scots to resist the opinions of the Dutchman, Jacobus Arminius, as presented by Daniel Tilenus in France, although it could be doubted whether this opposition should be described as "hatred of Arminian views."[1] That he considered the teaching of Arminius to be "poison" is amply borne out in his letter to John Forbes, then an exile in Holland: "Fail not to send Arminius against Perkins De Predestinatione, whatever it cost, with the contra-poison, done by Gomarus, quem singulariter amo ev Kupiw".[2]

Melville died in 1622, the same year in which John Cameron, back from Saumur, was suspected of having disseminated Arminian ideas in the University of Glasgow.[3]

From Sedan the spotlight shifts to Saumur, a town on the banks of the Loire, between Paris and Bordeaux. Its Protestant University was founded immediately after the Edict of Nantes in 1599 by the Governor of the town, Phillipe du Plessis-Mornay. At Saumur, the most progressive of the Academies, many Scotsmen found a seat of learning, either as professors or as students.[4]

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1. Ibid., p. 79.
2. McCrie, op. cit., p. 448, n.
3. Infra, Chapter II.
4. J. Panner, "Scots in Saumur in the Seventeenth Century", R.S.C.H.S. (Glasgow, 1935), Vol. V, pp. 140-143.

Among those who brought lustre to Reformed theology in Saumur and who later became professors of Divinity in Glasgow University, were Robert Boyd and John Cameron.[1] Robert Boyd (1578-1627), son of the Archbishop of Glasgow, was called in 1606 as Huguenot pastor to Saumur and also to give lectures in the University. Two years later he was formally elected Professor of Divinity at Saumur. He had hardly settled there, when he obtained leave of absence for a year and visited German and Dutch Universities, and Scotland.

As far as the trends and movements in the theological world were concerned, Boyd was very well-informed. He was not only kept up to date with details of the theological climate in Sedan in the north-east of France, but also with the threatening storm in Holland. The death of Arminius on 17th October, 1609 did not at the same time proclaim the death of the Arminian controversy. A new dispute and renewed bitterness erupted regarding the successor of Arminius at the University of Leiden. The curators desired a professor congenial with the spirit of Arminius, and their choice fell on Coenraad Vorstius.[2] Commotion in the church and the civil community followed. The man in the street joined the discussion for, as one writer puts it,

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1. For biographical details of Boyd: Reid, op. cit., pp. 115-169; Wodrow, op. cit., Vol. II, Part I; for John Cameron vide infra Chapter II.

2. H.Y. Groenewegen, "Vorstius", Nieuw Nederlandsch Biografisch Woordenboek, ed. P.C. Molhuysen & P.J. Blok, (Leiden, 1914), Vol. III, pp. 1342-1343 (Infra abbreviated as N.N.B.W.); G.D.J. Schotel, De Academie te Leiden (Haarlem, 1875), pp. 82-93.

"het regende pamfletten en blauwboekjes en de ongerijmdste fabelen werden omtrent den vreemden doctor in allerlei schuitenpraatjes onder het volk gestrooid."[1] It was not until a year after his appointment that Vorstius saw his way clear to accept the chair.

Of all these movements in Holland, Boyd was not unaware. A letter dated 10th September, 1611, from the hand of Jacobus Laurentius, believed to be a scholar of Boyd and well-known in Holland, informed him as to these developments.[2] When Boyd went back to Scotland in 1615 to fill the Divinity Chair and to take up the position of Principal of Glasgow University, he undoubtedly "took with him from the Continent, where many of his years of study and teaching had been spent, an intimate knowledge of the disputes in Holland."[3] His learned work on Ephesians also reflected this familiarity when he digressed into lengthy discussions of the controversies of his time.[4] He was undeniably unfavourably disposed towards the untraditional theological tendencies. It was even asserted that "he hated Arminianism",[5] but this appears to be an exaggeration.

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1. Schotel, op. cit., p. 85.
2. Wodrow, op. cit., p. 94.
3. G.D. Henderson, Religious Life in Seventeenth-Century Scotland (London, 1937), p. 87.
4. This work was published posthumously in 1652 as In Epistolam Pauli Apostoli ad Ephesios Praelectiones.
5. Reid, op. cit., p. 137.

Arminian theology in the Netherlands.

Scotland's knowledge of the theological disunity in the Netherlands was not only received via France. There were various channels of direct communication between the Low Countries and Scotland.

Trade connections dating from centuries before the Reformation had been maintained between these two countries.[1] In 1541 Campvere on the island of Walcheren became the depot of the Scottish trade. Undoubtedly "Scots merchants and sea-captains knew Campvere as well as they knew Kirkcaldy",[2] and the same could be said of the Dutch. It is very unlikely that the exchange was limited to merchandise. The Dutch have always been interested in theology and they would readily share their knowledge and their views on the theological questions of the day.

Another influx of Scots into the Netherlands and, consequently, another bridge of knowledge between these two countries, was occasioned

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1. J. Yair, An Account of the Scottish Trade in the Netherlands and the Staple Port in Campvere (London, 1776).
   J. Davidson and A. Gray, The Scottish Staple at Veere (London, 1909); W.R. Scott, The Constitution and Finance of English, Scottish and Irish Joint Stock Companies to 1720, 3 Vols., (Cambridge, 1910-1912).
   M.P. Rooseboom, The Scottish Staple in the Netherlands (The Hague, 1910).
2. G.D. Henderson, Religious Life in Seventeenth-Century Scotland (London, 1937), p. 71.

by the Dutch struggle against Spain.[1] In this unequal battle the States-General of the Low Countries appealed to Scotland for help. The Scottish Privy Council lent a willing ear and on 6th June, 1573, they resolved to assist in the defence of "Godd's trew religion" in the Netherlands.[2] Hereafter Scottish troops poured into the Low Lands. Their colours were the St. Andrews cross and their drums beat the Scottish march.[3] In 1609 the first fruit of the struggle appeared in the signing of the twelve years' truce. In 1648, by the peace of Westphalia signed at Munster, the war was concluded. "Thus," one writer remarked, "largely by the efforts of Scots soldiers the Dutch nation found a place upon the map of Europe".[4] Of the same tenor is the view that "the Scots Brigade rocked the cradle of the infant Dutch Republic",[5] but such judgments are unfair to the Dutch.

The Scots in the Netherlands, whether they were merchants, soldiers, or exiles, very soon organised themselves in public worship. Already in 1541 the staple contract granted to the traders of Dundee,

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1. P. Geyl, The Revolt of the Netherlands (London, 1932).
2. Papers Illustrating the History of the Scots Brigade in the Service of the United Netherlands, 1572-1782, ed. J. Ferguson, Scottish History Society, (Edinburgh, 1899-1920), Vol. I, p. 5.
3. H. Maxwell, The Lowland Scots Regiments (Glasgow, 1918), p. 314. This work also gives information of Scottish soldiers in other parts of the world, e.g. in South Africa where they fought in the Zulu War and in the Anglo-Boer War.
4. Ibid., p. 315.
5. Drummond, op. cit., p. 79.

Perth and St. Andrews "the choice and option of a suitable place in the collegiate church of our town of Campvere, with a chaplain . . . "[1] Scotland went further and in 1588 they resolved that "a Scotch Kirk be erected in the said town (i.e. Campvere) and a minister to be chosen to serve same, with his stipend to be provided out of the excise on wine and beer."[2] At the beginning of the seventeenth century there were Anglo-Scots congregations or chaplaincies, among others, in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, Utrecht, Haarlem, Campvere, Middelburg, Delft and Flushing.[3] Where Scotland had so much in common with the Low Countries with regard to religion, it was natural that the Scottish church and here members in Scotland and the Netherlands, would take notice of the theological and ecclesiastical movements in the Low Countries.

The Universities were a more direct source of information. Scots students at the Dutch Universities took back to their home-land knowledge and impressions of the theological trends and disputes.[4] Dutch students were also found in the Universities of Scotland. For the academic year November 1617 to August 1618, seven students from the

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1. Yair, op. cit., p. 117.
2. Ibid., p. 187.
3. W. Steven, The History of the Scottish Church, Rotterdam (Rotterdam, 1832), pp. 259ff.
4. According to the list of Edward Peacock, Index to the English Speaking Students who have graduated at Leyden University (London, 1883), twenty-seven Scottish students studied at Leiden between 1575 and 1618, but this list is not reliable.

Netherlands entered St. Mary's College in St. Andrews, and four the following year.[1]

The various ways indicated above, as well as private correspondence and books from the Netherlands, conveyed to Scotland some knowledge of the theological conditions and the rise of Arminianism.

In the preceding pages brief references were made to Arminius and Arminianism. Now something more must be added.[2] Jacobus Arminius was born in 1560 in Oudewater, a town approximately half-way between Rotterdam and Utrecht. In 1581 he went to Geneva where he studied under Beza as well as under Charles Perrot, "the more liberal Calvinist."[3] He also visited Basel and Zurich and returned to his home country in the autumn of 1587.

At that time certain theologico-political forces were active in the Netherlands. Significant is the case of Caspar Koolhaes, an ex-

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1. MSS. Records of St. Mary's College, Ref. No. UY 152/2, pp. 223-226; Acta Rectorum Ref. No. UY 305/3, pp. 163-165. The figures given by G.D. Henderson, Religious Life in Seventeenth-Century Scotland (London, 1937), p. 72 are incorrect. McCrie, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 490-496, also gives an imperfect list of foreign students in the Universities of Scotland.

2. For fuller information see "Arminius", Biographisch Woordenboek van Protestantsche Godgeleerden in Nederland, eds. J.P. de Bie and J. Loosjes, ('s-Gravenhage, n.d.), Vol. I, pp. 228-252. (Infra abbreviated: B.W.P.G.N.), and C. Bangs, "Arminius and Reformed Theology", Ph.D. Thesis, University of Chicago, 1958, containing extensive bibliographies. In 1960, i.e. 350 years after the death of Arminius, various commemorative articles appeared, e.g. in Religion in Life, Vol. XXIX, pp. 540-555; London Quarterly and Holborn Review, Vol. 185, pp. 245-268.

3. C. Bangs, "Arminius and the Reformation", Church History, Vol. XXX, 1961, p. 162.

monk who became a Reformed minister in 1560.[1] He revealed himself as an unorthodox thinker on predestination, free-will and grace. He advocated religious tolerance to such an extent that he was suspected of indifference to the doctrine of the church. He favoured the authoritative voice of the magistrates in the election of deacons and elders. After years of fruitless negotiations, Koolhaes was declared a schismatic and one who departed from pure doctrine. He was deposed on 25th March 1582, but the magistrate of Leiden refused to accept this decision and allowed Koolhaes to continue drawing his stipend. Finally he left the pulpit for a distillery. For all practical and dogmatical purposes Koolhaes can be considered the forerunner of Arminius.

The first vigorous opposition which Arminius encountered, was in 1603 when he was appointed Professor of Theology at Leiden. From this time on his thoughts began to appear in print. A review of the teachings of Arminius falls outside the scope of this study, but the Five Articles of 1610, the year after the death of Arminius, need be mentioned.[2] These articles, Articuli Arminiani sive Remonstantia, expressed the position of the Arminians (thereafter called Remonstants), and the same articles formed the basis of the discussion at the Synod of Dort eight years later.

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1. "Koolhaes", B.W.P.B.N., Vol. V, pp. 172-205.
2. Schaff, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 545-549, gives the text in Dutch as it was first published in 1612; also a Latin and English version.

For the sake of brevity but at the risk of neglecting the more delicate shades of theological distinctions, these five articles could be rendered as follows:

(1) God decreed to save those who would believe in Christ, and to condemn those who would reject him.

(2) Christ died for all but only believers enjoy forgiveness.

(3) Fallen man is powerless to accomplish anything truly good until he is born again and all his powers renewed.

(4) All good is dependent upon the grace of God, but as far as the mode of operation is concerned, this grace is not irresistible.

(5) Perseverance is effected through the assistance of the Holy Spirit and by the help of Christ, but it is not clear whether believers can lose their faith. (The Remonstrants at Dort went further and asserted that true believers could fall away).

A Contra-Remonstrance was issued by those who could not accede to these views, but the two parties found it impossible to reach an agreement. At last, the question came before the national Synod of Dort, convened on 13th November, 1618, and which lasted till 9th May 1619.[1] The result was the rejection and condemnation of the five points of the Remonstants and the drafting of five canons, a document which is, as one scholar puts it, "rather one of the classic

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1. H. Kajaan, De Groote Synode van Dordrecht in 1618-1619 (Amsterdam, 1918) gives fairly full details. A.W. Harrison, Arminianism (London, 1937), pp. 72-96 records it more concisely.

declarations of Calvinism than an exposition of Arminian error."[1]

Among the 28 foreign delegates of Reformed churches, there was also one to represent Scotland.[2] He was Walter Balcanqual, a Scot by birth but neither a minister nor a member of the Church of Scotland.[3] He, an Episcopalian, but decidedly a Calvinist, was appointed by James VI to speak for the Church of Scotland. He played an admirable part in the proceedings of the Synod and showed himself to be a man well-informed and shrewd in his judgment. Unlike some of the English deputies and contrary to Arminian universalism, he defended the view that Christ had died for the elect only.[4]

It is true, as was pointed out, that "Balcanqual in no real sense represented the Church of Scotland in the Synod of Dort".[5] He had no assignment from the Church, neither did he report to the Church of Scotland on the decisions of Dort on Arminianism or on other matters which the Synod had discussed and resolved.

In spite of this lack of communication between the Church of Scotland and its "representative", channels through which the

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1. Harrison, op. cit., p. 93.
2. G.D. Henderson, Religious Life in Seventeenth-Century Scotland (London, 1937), pp. 77-83, describes the position of Scotland at the Synod of Dort.
3. For biographical details, D.N.B., Vol. I, (1959-1960 edition), pp. 945-946; Golden Remains of the Ever Memorable Mr. John Hales (London, 1659); R. Baillie, Letters and Journals, 1637-1652, 3 Vols., (Edinburgh, 1841, 1842).
4. Harrison, op. cit., p. 92.
5. G.D. Henderson, Religious Life in Seventeenth-Century Scotland (London, 1937), p. 83.

information could flow, were open. Shortly after the Synod of Dort, references by Scottish theologians were made as to imply that the whole theological world was acquainted with its proceedings and decisions.[1]

To conclude this survey of Scotland's encounter with Arminianism, there is another point worthy of notice. Attention was drawn to the fact that Scotland met Arminianism, or at least the spirit of Arminianism, in France, in Holland and in Scotland itself. This is to some extent indicative of the fact that Arminianism was part of a wider movement. Arminianism did not only begin with a controversy on predestination; neither was it only a revolt against ultra-Calvinism; nor was it confined to the Netherlands.

Arminianism should be seen in the wider framework of the approaching Enlightenment which was to spread over Europe. The Enlightenment was a movement in which the strong resurgence of humanistic values based on man's heightened awareness of his moral and intellectual powers made him conscious of himself. He was finding himself in a world where a metaphysical system was gradually being replaced by a natural system.[2] In this natural system more attention was directed towards man, his well-being and his liberty. The awareness grew that God

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1. Ibid., p. 87.
2. W. Dilthy, "Das Natürliche System der Geisteswissenschaften im Siebzehnten Jahrhundert", Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie, (Berlin, 1892), Vol. V, pp. 480-503, Vol. VI, pp. 60-127.

had not created the world for his own glory but for the happiness of man, and that God desired the happiness of all men. Coinciding with this was the conviction that man was free to choose happiness, free to follow his own insight and free from doctrinal ties or the assertions of higher authorities. The Enlightenment was a process of free inquiry, and consequently, very often a rejection or radical interpretation of Christian doctrine. That is why Wilhelm Dilthy, referring to the natural system of the Enlightenment, could speak of "Auflosung der Kirchenlehre durch Socinianer und Arminianer."[1] One can almost agree with the scholar who characterised the religious aspect of the Enlightenment as "a renewal of the struggle between Augustine and Pelagius, Renaissance humanism and the Reformation, Luther and Erasmus and finally between the ideal of human freedom and autonomy and the belief in the bondage of the will."[2]

It must be added that Arminius would not have found himself in full agreement with such a movement. He himself did not go to such an extent, but as a theologian he was on the way to extricating himself from the recepta doctrina ecclesiae, or as a learned Dutch church historian expressed it, "Arminius was bezig in een bepaald opzicht de gereformeerde leer los te wrikken."[3] In this process he was only

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1. Ibid., Vol. VI, p. 87.
2. H.E. Allison, Lessing and the Enlightenment (University of Michigan Press, 1966), p. 2.
3. D. Nauta, "Arminius, Grondlegger van het Remonstrantisme", Centraal Weekblad, No. 39, 8th October, 1960.

an agent of a growing spiritual movement which tried to liberate itself from a spiritual environment which was found to be too restrictive.[1] Or to use another figure of speech, Arminianism was the religious thread in the complex cord of the Enlightenment which was coming into being.

It would be correct to describe Arminius as a "liberal Calvinist",[2] but it is doubtful whether Arminianism, especially in its later developments, could claim Calvin as father. And of this, Scotland was duly aware.

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1. For the era of the Enlightenment's attitude towards religion and dogma, see E. Cassirer, The Philosophy of the Enlightenment (Princeton, 1951), pp. 134-196.

2. H.D. Foster, "Liberal Calvinism; The Remonstrants at the Synod of Dort in 1618", Harvard Theological Review, Vol. XVI, pp. 1-37.

II

JOHN CAMERON AND HIS TEACHINGS

Scotland's theologians were acquainted with the progress of events overseas and, as far as theology was concerned, they took a stand more or less similar to that of the orthodox Calvinists of Holland. This did not prevent that three years after the close of the Synod of Dort, one of Scotland's own Divinity Professors became suspected of fostering views resembling those of the Arminians. The suspect was John Cameron (1570-1625).[1] Although one Scottish scholar is of the opinion that "we can hardly reckon him among our Scotch divines" and that "his attempted mediation between Calvin and Arminius had little success"[2], Cameron's influence in and outside Scotland must not be underrated.

Cameron and France.

John Cameron was born and educated in Glasgow. In 1600 he left his country and went to France. In Bordeaux he taught Latin and Greek, the latter language, it is said, he spoke "with as great ease as ever

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1. Biographical details are given by Reid, op. cit., pp. 172-251, with full Bibliography on pp. 250-251; Wodrow, op. cit., Vol. II, Part II.

2. J. Walker, op. cit., p. 6.

Cicero did Latin".[1] His growing reputation carried him to the Chair of Philosophy in Sedan, where his Divinity colleague, Daniel Tilenus, according to Cameron's biographer, "was rapidly passing from Calvinism to the Arminian side."[2]

As "travelling scholar in Divinity" appointed by the Bordeaux church, he studied at Geneva and Heidelberg.[3] In 1608 he returned to Bordeaux where he was ordained as a minister in the French Reformed Church.[4]

In Bordeaux Cameron started to make known his thoughts on the way and extent of salvation. In four letters to his friend, Louis Cappel, who it seems "had been touched by Arminian influences"[5], he expressed his views. In these letters[6] Cameron did not enter into Arminian territory. He felt convinced that salvation rested on God's good pleasure on account of which faith is given to men to receive Christ. Regarding the extent of salvation, Cameron explained his view as follows: Salvation is as universal as light, but a person sleeping or shutting the eyes receives no light. The sunlight is sufficient, but

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1. T. Urquhart, "The Jewel", Works (Edinburgh, 1834), p. 258.
2. Reid, op. cit., p. 177.
3. Reid, op. cit., p. 174; Wodrow, op. cit., p. 87.
4. Wodrow, op. cit., p. 89.
5. Reid, op. cit., p. 180.
6. J. Cameron, ΤΑ ΣΩΖΟΜΕΝΑ, ed. S. Boucherellus, L. Cappel and M. Amyraut, (Geneva, 1642), pp. 530-536. Extracts of these letters are given by Wodrow, op. cit., pp. 92-105.

as far as sight is concerned, it is valueless for them with closed or blind eyes. In other words, Christ died for all, but his death makes happy only those who accept him by faith.[1]

Cappel found such an opinion akin to the Lutheran universalism because it contained the implication that Christ died for Judas in the same way as for Peter. To this Cameron would not accede. He tried to explain this mystery by accepting"a twofold mercy in God"[2], namely, in giving Christ and in giving grace. Christ and his death embraced Judas as well as Peter, but faith alone given to Peter enabled him to embrace Christ. With this distinction Cameron believed that he was moving in line with the church of all ages, for he said,

> "The church has alwise given Christ the title of the 'Saviour of the world', and divines do not oppose this, only they soften it by a little distinction, because the expression sounds a little harsh, and teach that in respect of sufficiency Christ dyed for all, but in point of efficacy, only for believers. In this I do not differ."3

In these letters one sees a theologian who wished to remain true to the Reformed principles but who desired to find a way out of the difficulties which have always beset the question of salvation. Cameron encountered the real difficulty when he attempted to explain

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1. Wodrow, op. cit., p. 98.
2. Ibid., p. 95.
3. Ibid., p. 100.

the application of the work of salvation. Is it an act of the will? What is the relationship between the will and faith? What is the relationship between the will of God and the will of man in salvation? On these puzzling questions Cameron proffered no consistent answers. Even his favourite illustration that a person sleeping or shutting the eyes, does not have the benefit of the universal light, reveals an ambiguity. If in this analogy the lack of benefit from the light is due to the overwhelming power of sleep, man's own free will is ruled out, but if he excludes the light by wilfully closing the eyes, the lack of sight is due to his own act. Whether "Arminius was very near his ear, whispering the comfortable doctrine that every man may be saved if he will,"[1] cannot at this stage, i.e. 1610-1612, be determined.

In 1618 Cameron was offered a Chair of Divinity at Saumur, at that time one of the most important and influential of the Protestant theological schools in France. Here Cameron showed himself to be a champion of orthodox theology. In a theological debate on the thesis "De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio", Cameron asserted the corrupt nature of man and his inability to contribute anything to his salvation, "save only the faculty of willing . . . " He realized that in the

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1. Reid, op. cit., pp. 185-186. This is not a correct representation of Arminius on the will. His own words are, "Free-will is unable to begin or to perfect any true and spiritual good without grace . . . This grace is simply and absolutely necessary for . . . the inclination of the will to that which is good." See The Writings . . . of Arminius (Grand Rapids, 1956), Vol. II, p. 472.

plan and execution of salvation "man is not merely a stock or stone" but he was careful not to make man's salvation rest on one's own free-will. He summed up his views as follows:

> As in the first call, so likewise in perseverance, there is no co-operation of free-will and grace, tho', if I may use the phrase, there is a sub-operation and under-working, we working out our own salvation when God works in us both to will and to do. 1

This seems to be scriptural enough, but it was alleged that in private Cameron went much further in a liberal direction than he ever ventured in public.[2]

At Dort the Arminian dispute was determined, but it was not terminated in the Netherlands, nor in France. In April, 1920, Daniel Tilenus of Sedan invited John Cameron of Saumur to debate with him on "the shares of the grace of God and the powers of man's free-will in effective calling."[3] The subject of the dispute was taken from articles XXI and XXII of the French Confession of Faith of 1559.[4] These two lengthy articles Cameron condensed into five statements:

(1) Faith results from the illumination of man by the Holy Spirit of God.

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1. Wodrow, op. cit., pp. 131-132.
2. Reid, op. cit., p. 212.
3. Wodrow, op. cit., p. 143.
4. Schaff, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 371-372.

(2) This enlightenment is a free gift of God to some of mankind.

(3) In so far as this means a preference to some, one can speak of those as "chosen".

(4) This benefit cannot be lost since God Himself is the preserver of His gift.

(5) Faith which is the efficacious knowledge of the chief and true good, moves the will to seek and to adhere to the chief good, so that faith and good works can never be alienated from each other.[1]

Needless to say, these five points were not the same as the five of Dort, but they met in many respects. In election to salvation as a free act of God, faith to salvation as an illuminating gift of a gracious God, and perseverance in salvation as the sustaining power of God, Cameron seems to have echoed the voice of Dort.

The greatest part of the discussion was confined to the question, what reason could be assigned that of two adult persons, both equally corrupt and wicked, one should be illuminated and saved, but the other left behind to get lost in the shadows of darkness and death? Tilenus held that the cause of such a differential treatment should be sought in the most hidden merits of men - occultissimis hominum meritis - only known to God. This view of election based on God's foreknowledge

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1. Wodrow, op. cit., pp. 145-146.

was rejected by Cameron. As a Calvinist and like a Dordracenist he maintained that the only reason could be the sovereign dispensation of God's mercy.[1]

While Cameron tried to sail in the water of orthodoxy, his opponents believed that he was drifting into the territory of the Arminians. Especially his views on the role of the will in calling and salvation, exposed him to accusations and attacks.[2] Briefly and simply stated, Cameron believed that the Holy Spirit enlightens the mind which in turn motivates the will. For Cameron the will is depraved but nevertheless still a faculty capable of action. As far as the acceptance of salvation is concerned, the will responds and reacts to the Spirit's immediate action on the mind. It was particularly this view which caused Cameron to be suspected, not only in France, but also in the Netherlands.

Cameron and the Netherlands

Cameron's name very soon became well-known in the theological circles of the Netherlands. While the Synod of Dort was in session, he sent copies of his thesis to Festus Hommius, a Divinity Professor at Leiden and an outspoken opponent of the Remonstrants.[3] In a

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1. Ibid., p. 146.
2. For further details of Cameron on the will and the arguments against his view, see Wodrow, op. cit., pp. 147-151.
3. For biographical details, see "Hommius", B.W.P.G.N., Vol. IV, pp. 198-218.

letter dated 17th March, 1620, Hommius testified that "as for myself, I have observed nothing in your book which departs from the sound doctrine and even that lately declared by our Synod."[1]

The theological discussion between Cameron and Tilenus in April, 1620, stirred up much interest in the Low Countries. According to a letter of Hommius dated 25th January, 1622, the text of the debate was read in the faculty of theology in Leiden and was put into the hands of a printer. In this letter Hommius urged Cameron to continue "in meriting much from the sound and orthodox churches, by your solide asserting and vindicating the divine truth."[2]

Less than a month after this, Cameron received another letter from Leiden written by André Rivet, Divinity Professor at the University of Leiden.[3] In this letter he expressed the wish of the Faculty of Divinity that some hypotheses concerning his dispute with Tilenus would be "cleared up or softened, lest our common adversarys, who are ready to catch up the smallest differences among us who defend the truth, improve them against us . . . "[4] The two propositions which provoked the disagreement of the Leiden theologians were Cameron's exposition of Romans IX and his notion on the

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1. Wodrow, op. cit., p. 205.
2. Ibid., p. 206.
3. For biographical details, see "Rivet", N.N.B.W., Vol. VII, p. 1051.
4. Wodrow, op. cit., p. 147.

will. Referring to the former, Rivet seems to imply that Cameron's exegesis ran on the same lines as that of the Arminians. The cardinal point of criticism, however, was Cameron's account of the operation of the will. The Dutch divines clearly expressed their disapproval of Cameron's failure to see that "an immediate divine influx" upon the will is necessary in order to effect conversion. If Cameron would acknowledge that, Rivet wrote, "there will be no difference betwixt you and us".[1]

The Leiden theologians not only desired that Cameron would change his views on the will, but they also offered him the standard by which to judge his own orthodoxy, namely, the Canons of Dort. They requested him to affix an "advertisement" to his account of the conference with Tilenus, signifying his "acquiescence and entire consent to the sentiments of the churches, who have explained themselves upon the whole controversy at the synod of Dort . . . "[2]

It is not difficult to trace the reason why Rivet and his colleagues insisted upon such a statement of adherence to Dort. They wanted to fortify the bulwark against their Arminian adversaries, and in Cameron they saw a formidable intellectual warrior. But another possibility should not be overlooked. It is quite conceivable

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1. Ibid., p. 147.
2. Ibid., p. 148.

that they believed that at least the greater part of the whole truth had been expressed by the Synod of Dort, and thus considered it quite natural that conformity should be expected, even outside the Netherlands.

Cameron was not so easily persuaded that his views on the will were incorrect, nor was he so readily convinced that Dort should be applied as a detector of all dogmatical flaws. He defended himself vigorously against Leiden's accusations that he had ascribed too much to man's will in obtaining salvation. With some impatience he answered them expressing his belief that "God sustains and upholds all things, exerts his power in all things, and acts all things in everything."[1] With this he desired to place it beyond all doubt that God's supreme will was the first cause of all things, but at the same time he wished to leave some operating space for man's will. That is why he hastened to add:

> God acts . . . in such a manner as not to disturb the order of second causes, which among themselves are fit and connected, so that we cannot even separate them in our very thoughts, and this way I acknowledge and magnify the power of God, his influx and causality, or whatever other terms be used upon the will itself. 2

The request from Rivet and his colleagues for an "advertisement" in respect of his agreement with Dort did not meet with Cameron's approval. Not that he found himself in opposition to the theological

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1. Ibid., p. 150.
2. Ibid.

views of the famous Synod. On the contrary, in his answer to the Divinity Professors in March 1622, he wrote: "I approve of the Canons of Dort as much as any. If any suggest otherwise, they either do not know me, or very little love me."[1] The reason he offered why he did not feel inclined to assent to their wish, was that he could not see what end it would serve. As far as his own position was concerned, such an "advertisement" could have served as a stabilizing factor during the following year when he found himself in troubled waters in Glasgow.

Cameron in Glasgow

The events of Cameron's short stay in Scotland can be briefly recorded.[2] In 1622 he received an appointment as Principal and Professor of Divinity in the University of Glasgow. Very soon after he had started lecturing, Cameron and his colleague in Moral Philosophy, Robert Blair, had a serious exchange of words on election and the authority of the Synod of Dort.

Blair recorded the incident in his autobiography. At a discussion of a thesis, "Election for unseen faith," Cameron and his student defended this proposition. Blair, not satisfied, admonished the

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1. Ibid., p. 149.
2. Fuller details given by Wodrow, op. cit., pp. 159-169, Reid, op. cit., pp. 211-224.

exponents that the Synod of Dort had determined the opposite of what the defenders asserted. The point was fervently argued, and according to Blair, "reports did fly through the town hereupon - some affirming that Mr. Cameron and the French student . . . who was his disciple, had maintained openly in disputation a point of Arminianism condemned by the Synod of Dort, others said that I had openly charged them to have done so."[1]

Concerning the orthodoxy of Cameron, not much can be deduced from this incident. It could very well have been that Cameron and his student defended the afore-mentioned thesis in the fashion of an academic dispute without attaching their own personal beliefs to their verbal defence. That he was unorthodox, he himself would not admit; he even engaged in an open discussion with Tilenus to prove his orthodox supremacy. Having said all this, it still remains true that he did not define his theological position after the example and according to the Canons of Dort. Therefore his views were not readily accepted in the Netherlands.

In Scotland where with the increase of knowledge of Arminianism, the aversion grew in equal proportion, Cameron was also viewed with suspicion. His stay was not long enough to show his true doctrinal stand - if indeed he had something more to show - or to influence his students widely and deeply. In August 1623, he was back in France

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1. T. McCrie, (ed.), The Life of Mr. Robert Blair, (Edinburgh, 1845), pp. 41-42. The report given by Wodrow, op. cit., pp. 161-166 is also taken from Blair's MSS.

where he stayed until his death on 27th November, 1625, caused by the blow of an assaillant.[1]

Cameron - an Arminian?

In the afore-going pages extracts were given of Cameron's theology. Now the question whether he could be called an Arminian, presents itself.

There seems to be a consensus of opinion that Cameron showed a marked divergence from the narrowly defined orthodoxy. His views revealed freedom of thought, but they were not free from intellectual speculation. To his biographer, Wodrow, it was "too evident (that) Mr. Cameron had very much of a turn to innovations in doctrine and seemed to have an inclination to depart from the received truth."[2] Wodrow went even further when he concluded that Cameron "made such concessions as give the Arminians vast advantage," particularly because "he seems to have broached the opinion of universall conditional redemption."[3] The biographer of Simon Episcopius sounded the same note when he voiced the opinion that while Cameron was opposing Episcopius' sentiments on the subject of free-will, "he adopted from

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1. Reid, op. cit., p. 231, Wodrow, op. cit., pp. 209-210.
2. Wodrow, op. cit., p. 82.
3. Ibid., p. 83.

the creed of the Arminians the doctrine of universal redemption."[1] While it is open to doubt whether Cameron had "adopted" his views on universal redemption from the Arminians, the author was right in seeing certain similarities.

A more recent writer concluded his short biography of Cameron by saying that "Melville remained with the Calvinists; Cameron was moving steadily towards the Arminians when death arrested him."[2] How close he came to the Arminian camp was indicated by an expert on Arminianism when he said, "John Cameron . . . was really more than half-way to Arminianism already."[3] Expressed in other words, but denoting the same accommodating trend in Cameron's theology, it is said that "he tried to steer a middle course of his own between the Calvinism of the Synod of Dort, and the Arminianism which he condemned."[4]

It will be agreed that it is not really feasible to use such geometrical terms to indicate a theological position. Perhaps it is not even correct to describe Cameron's theology as "a reaction against strict Calvinism."[5] Never did he create the impression of being a reactionary theologian. In retrospect, however, the historian sees

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1. T. Calder, Memoirs of Simon Episcopius, (London, 1835), p. 523.
2. Reid, op. cit., p. 248.
3. Harrison, op. cit., p. 110.
4. J. Macleod, Scottish Theology in Relation to Church History since the Reformation (Edinburgh, 1943), p. 60.
5. A. Milroy, "The Doctrine of the Church of Scotland," The Church of Scotland, ed. R.H. Story, (London, n.d.), Vol. IV, p. 209.

Cameron as performing a part in the comprehensive movement of "reaction against strict Calvinism", and only in that sense can such a statement be maintained. It should, nevertheless, not be overlooked that he displayed the brightest banner of Calvinism by stressing the supremacy and sovereignty of God in his free-will and gracious actions to mankind. Cameron wrestled with the Arminians such as Tilenus and Episcopius, while Hugo Grotius characterised his views as "idle figment."[1]

It is more plausible to say that Cameron, a Reformed theologian, came through study and thought to hold certain notions not reconciliable with the strict Calvinism of France, Holland, and Scotland. It has already been pointed out that his views on man's will did not find favour in the eyes of the Leiden theologians. He was more than frowned upon in Glasgow, because it was believed that he taught conditional election. It is sure that Cameron understood election to be intimately connected with faith, but he would never conceive of faith as a condition to be fulfilled by man in order to be elected to eternal life. This would make election rest upon man's faith and God's foreknowledge. What he did maintain was that God first decreed to make men believers, and then God decreed to save those who would believe.[2]

If one would be capable of surmounting the time-barrier in thinking of God, his actions, and purpose for man, one would perhaps find that

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1. Quoted by Reid, op. cit., p. 239.
2. Milroy, op. cit., p. 210. To compare this view with that of Arminius, see C. Bangs, "Arminius and the Reformation", Church History, Vol. XXX, 1961, pp. 166-167.

Calvin's and Cameron's views on predestination were not so widely apart as often presented. They both firmly maintained that election was a free act of the divine will, that election was founded upon and in Jesus Christ, that man became a member of Christ by faith, and that faith was the result of an illumination of the Holy Spirit.[1]

It was not so much for his more liberal views on the will and predestination that Cameron's name came to be remembered, but for his "hypothetical universalism," which offered to many critics another reason to brand him as an Arminian. Cameron's pupil, Moise Armyraldus[2] developed this system in detail, but practically the whole of it can be found in Cameron's own writings. Concisely summarized, "hypothetical universalism" comes to this: There is a double will in God. Conditionally God wills to save all mankind, that is, if they will believe the Gospel and receive Christ who died for all men without exception. Absolutely he wills to save his elect and to them he gives not merely a promise of salvation if they believe, but the gift of faith itself.[3] This distinction alone, Cameron maintained, accounts fairly for the Biblical evidence on the will of God and the death of Christ.

The vital question to be raised on this kind of universalism is: What changes the hypothetical reference into a real and particular reference? Is it the action of God or man? If the change is effected

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1. For a short survey of Calvin on these points, see T. Wendel, Calvin (London, 1963), pp. 272-276.
2. A thorough study of Amyraldus' modified Calvinism is offered by L. Proctor, "The Theology of Moise Amyrault, considered as a reaction against 17th Century Calvinism," unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Leeds University, 1952.
3. G.P. Fisher, History of Christian Doctrine (Edinburgh, 1916), p. 343.

by man, then Cameron and his pupils were Arminian in this respect. If on the other hand the mystery lies in the hidden actions of God, then Cameron's theology on this point did not differ substantially from orthodox Calvinism.

Amyraldus believed that while he was following his master, Cameron, he was also treading in the tracks of Calvin. He tried to show that Calvin taught a universal grace calling all men to faith and repentance. Indeed, it seems that Calvin at times laid down a somewhat more liberal view when he said, "Our Lord Jesus came not to reconcile a small number of people to God his Father, but wished to extend his grace to the whole world." Yet, in view of other passages, Calvin cannot fairly be claimed a clear advocate of universal redemption.[1]

Amyraldus interpreted Calvin's teaching in a liberal way, "and yet," comments one scholar, "preserved both it and himself within the limits of orthodoxy."[2] The historian, Mosheim, found reason for another verdict on the scheme of hypothetical universalism. "After considering and reconsidering it," he wrote, "it appears to me to be Arminianism, or if you please, Pelagianism, artificially dressed up and veiled in ambiguous terms."[3] As Cameron was the originator of the system of hypothetical universalism, this accusation of Arminianism was also directed to his address.

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1. H.D. Foster, op. cit., p. 19.
2. Ibid., p. 24.
3. J.L. von Mosheim, Institutes of Ecclesiastical History, Ancient and Modern, trans. J. Murdock (London, 1850), Vol. IV, p. 221.

With this we return to the question initially asked: Was Cameron of Arminian sentiment? It needs to be said here that it is not exactly the task of the church historian to analyse and classify the doctrinal views of theologians, but from a historical point of view a few remarks could be made. Cameron never consciously and deliberately sided with the Arminians, in fact, he was constantly attacking them. The Arminians of his time did not recognize and hail him as an ally, and he never quoted with approval from their controversal writings. With this everything is not said. From a dogmatical point of view it cannot be denied that in some of his expressions on election, free-will, and the extent of redemption, there were undeniably resemblances to the notions of the Arminians. Only in this sense and due to lack of better and briefer description and for the sake of convenience, could Cameron be termed a semi-Arminian. Even then it should be remembered that the Arminians, and much more the semi-Arminians of Europe in those days, were Calvinists, although of a more liberal nature.

Cameron's Influence in Scotland.

Before concluding this chapter on John Cameron and his teachings, it is necessary to try to indicate the broad lines of Cameron's influence on the theology of Scotland.

It is very unlikely that he had exerted any influence on theological thought in Scotland before he returned there in 1622. His debate with Tilenus and his refusal to append a statement of approval of the Canons of Dort to the report of this conference, was in all probability known in Scotland. Cameron's short stay in Glasgow was not devoid of theological importance. It can be agreed that "the presence of such a man, even for that brief period, gave an impetus to fresh theological investigation."[1] By this, it is not suggested that at that time he had a marked effect on the doctrine held in his native country, but as another writer commented, "he did enough to quicken the interest of many in the pressing theological problems of the day."[2]

During his time a limited but quite influential group of theologians in Scotland were steadily moving away from the Calvinist doctrinal system which they found too rigid. They desired more scope for free inquiry and a slackening of the Confessional ties. These divines were the Aberdeen Doctors. To what extent they looked up to Cameron for inspiration, is difficult to ascertain, but it is probably correct to say that "among the first to sound the note of this new

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1. Milroy, op. cit., p. 209.
2. D. MacMillan, The Aberdeen Doctors (London, 1909), p. 107.

departure, was John Cameron."[1]

The influence of Cameron's teaching, especially that on universal redemption, manifested itself in a clear manner a century after his death. This type of teaching then found its way back to Scotland via England. In England, Richard Baxter adhered to and propagated views on universal redemption commonly known as the New Method, and as one scholar asserts, "his influence told powerfully in modifying the older Calvinism of Scotland from the first quarter of the eighteenth century onward."[2]

It is evident from Baxter's own writings that he was heavily indebted to Cameron and the school of Saumur for his views on the atonement. His universalism which closely resembled that of Cameron, is summarized as follows:

> Christ died for all, but not for all equally. There are some benefits, such as faith and repentance which only a part of mankind actually possess, and hence we conclude that Christ did not determine that his death should eventually put all men in possession of faith. And yet He did intend and decree that the gift of them should be offered to all. 3

Like Cameron, he believed that God predestined men to destruction only on the foresight of their wilful sin, whereas election to salvation is absolute and not conditioned by God's foreknowledge of repentance.[4]

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1. Ibid.
2. MacLeod, op. cit., p. 61.
3. G.P. Fisher, "The Theology of Richard Baxter," Bibliotheca Sacra, 1852, Vol. IX, p. 161. A recent study covering Baxter's universalism is done by J.J. Packer, "The Redemption and Restoration of man in the thought of Richard Baxter." Unpublished D.Phil. Thesis, University of Oxford, 1954.
4. G.P. Fisher, "The Theology of Richard Baxter", Bibliotheca Sacra, 1852, Vol. IX, p. 159.

In England, Baxter and his followers, the "middle-way men," were eyed with suspicion because the orthodox group interpreted their theology as a departing from Calvinism and a heading for Arminianism.[1] Various groups in Scotland were even more alarmed by these signs of "decline in Calvinism" and repeatedly uttered warnings against Baxterianism which they understood to be a new and refined form of Arminianism.[2] These warnings alone were indicative of the fact that Cameron's views revived and were making progress in Scotland.

In all fairness to Baxter, it should be noted that the foundation of his thought about man's redemption was unquestionably Calvinistic. Although it is true that he was tinted with Arminianism it cannot be denied that those tints were overshadowed by his praise for Westminster and Dort when he said: "The Christian world has never (had) a Synod of more excellent divines (taking one thing with another) than this Synod (i.e. Westminster) and the Synod of Dort."[3]

The middle of the eighteenth century brought another resurgence of universalism in Scotland. In 1749 a work entitled A Treatise on Justifying Faith came off the printing press. In this book the author, James Fraser of Brae, asserted a redemption of all mankind. Stated in

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1. J.L. Neve, "Arminianism in its influence upon England", Bibliotheca Sacra, April 1931, vol. LXXXIII, pp. 153-154.
2. Act of the Associate Presbytery Concerning the Doctrine of Grace (Edinburgh, 1744), pp. vii-viii.
3. T. McCrie, Annals of English Presbytery, from the Earliest Period to the Present Time (London, 1872), p. 175.

its briefest and boldest form, Fraser's theory is that all men are fundamentally justified in and through Christ who obeyed and died for them all. But not all will in the end be saved; only a limited number chosen to benefit by Christ's atoning work, will be personally justified. From this it is apparent that Fraser's view on the atonement was nothing but a recapitulation of Cameron's hypothetical universalism. The dogmatical and ecclesiastical consequences of Fraser's teaching will be outlined in a subsequent chapter.[1]

To conclude, the judgment of a principal-emeritus of the Free Church College could be cited:

> Along with the disintegrating work of the New Light movement, which was of home growth and which spoke of an uneasy spirit of dissatisfaction with long accepted truth and of a restlessness that was in quest of something new, the various streams of influence that derived remotely from Cameron are responsible for the collapse of the Confessional orthodoxy which had for ages found a home in his native country. 2

Substituting "collapse" for "liberalization", one can find oneself in general agreement with this statement on Cameron's influence in Scotland.

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1. Infra, Chapter VI.
2. MacLeod, op. cit., pp. 62-63.

III

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF 1638

While the spirit of John Cameron was seeking entrance into Scottish theology during the first quarter of the seventeenth century, a similar but much more marked movement was taking place in England. As the theological and ecclesiastical trends in England affected Scotland and had an important bearing on the General Assembly of 1638, a short review of the occurrences in England is deemed necessary.[1]

Liberal Theology in England.

This movement in England, resembling those in France and the Netherlands, was partly philosophical and partly theological in composition. It was philosophical in so far as it had its basis in the revival of Platonic idealism, and theological in so far as it was motivated by a reaction against Calvinism which was found to be too rigid in construction as well as derogatory to human values.

Peter Baro, a Huguenot professor of the University of Cambridge, was one of the first to make this movement perceptible when he

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1. More details are given by Harrison, op. cit., pp. 122-151; W.O. Chadwick, "Arminianism in England", Religion in Life, Vol. XXIX, Autumn, 1960, pp. 549-552.

attempted to introduce liberal theology into his lectures. A series of complaints listed against him as early as 1581 showed that he was inclined to views similar to those held by the Arminians a few decades later.[1] An unsparing opponent of this theology, writing in 1629, was convinced that the Professor's teaching was nothing but Arminian errors.[2] On 29th March of the same year, William Barrett, a fellow of Caius College, Cambridge, preached a University sermon in which he strongly argued against the Calvinist doctrines of predestination, assurance and perseverance.[3] The University took grave exception to his theology and requested a recantation from him. It was in particular the doctrine of predestination which was considered to be of the utmost importance. This is clear from the fact that Article 17 of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England was quoted extensively in the renunciation which the University laid before Barrett for subscription.[4]

In an attempt to quell this waxing unorthodoxy, Calvinist theologians of England, supported by Archbishop John Whitgift, drew

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1. D.N.B. (1959-1960 edition) Vol. I, pp. 1185-1187.
2. W. Prynne, The Church of Englands Old Antithesis to New Arminianisme (London, 1629), p. 124.
3. Chadwick, op. cit., p. 549; Prynne, op. cit.,,p. 45.
4. Prynne, op. cit., p. 47. For the text of the 17th Article, see P. Schaff, The Creeds of the Evangelical Protestant Churches (London, 1877), pp. 497-498.

up the Lambeth Articles which were published in 1595, and which set forth most of the doctrine twenty-four years later enunciated by the Synod of Dort.[1] These articles marked the zenith of Calvinist influence in the Church of England, but at the same time it stimulated and activated the latent opposition to Calvinism. Men like Lancelot Andrews, John Overall and Richard Thomson continued to propagate liberal, some would say Arminian, views.[2] These views found fertile soil, but that they were not readily accepted is clear from the refusal to grant a licence to Thomson to publish his book Diatriba de Amissione et Intercisione Gratiae et Justificationis in England. It found a publisher in Leiden in 1616. Apart from resisting the prevailing Calvinist doctrine of predestination, he maintained that Christ died for all and not only for the elect.[3]

Predestination was a well discussed subject. Prynne provided an impressive wealth of material on more than one hundred writers and their notions on this subject during the years 1550 and 1629, and concluded that all of them had purposely, copiously, unanimously, constantly, and professedly defended the doctrines then attacked by the Arminians.[4] That this discussion of predestination was not

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1. See P. Schaff, Ibid., pp. 523-525, for the text of this document containing nine very short articles.
2. Harrison, op. cit., p. 123.
3. Chadwick, op. cit., p. 550.
4. Prynne, op. cit., p. 117.

considered an arm-chair activity of a few theologians but that it was of importance to every Christian, is demonstrated by the evidence of Prynne that a pamphlet containing a number of questions and answers on predestination which was first printed in 1607, was always "bound up and sold cum privilegio with the Authorized translation of the Bible till the year 1614 since which no Bibles of this sort were printed."[1] These "certaine questions and answeres touching the doctrine of predestination" reflected an orthodox view, inter alia, that "some are vessels of wrath ordained unto destruction, as others are vessels of mercy prepared to glory."[2]

Despite all this, Arminianism easily managed to make serious inroads on orthodox teaching. Judged by the fervent manner in which Prynne wrote, one cannot escape the impression that ten years after the Synod of Dort, Arminianism had become an important element of English theology. Addressing the Court of Parliament in the preface of his book he requested "some inexorable strict and vigilant Acts of Parliament" to strike at the danger of Arminianism.[3] In this appeal he pictured Arminianism vividly:

> We see its living and springen up like Hydraes heades, its former over-indulgent decapitations both at Dort, at home, being but a

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1. Ibid., p. 41.
2. Ibid., p. 38.
3. Prynne, op. cit., preface, no pagination.

> blood-letting to increase its future vigour, not a fatall blow to bring it to its finall period; because it cut not off those matter-veines which gave greatest, though but hidden life and growth unto it. O, therefore, give and strike it . . . a finall, fatall and heart-killing blow which needes no iteration; and bury them this once so deepe, so sure, that they may never neede a second Funerall. 1

The desired and decisive blow, however, was never struck and the funeral of Arminian thought never took place. On the contrary, the Church of England proved more and more to be fertile soil for the growth and flourishing of Arminianism.

It is only fair to the Church of England that it be pointed out that not everything which was labelled "Arminian" was so in fact. Very often the term Arminianism was applied as a word of abuse rather than an attempt at accurate description. To the English Puritan of the seventeenth century everything which was not inflexible Calvinism was often termed Arminianism.[2] A certain degree of jealousy of the High Church clergy who held unorthodox views and yet enjoyed favour and possessed power, contributed to give the term Arminianism a vituperative connotation.[3]

Liberal theology in England, of which Arminian views formed a substantial component, received a new incentive in the person of

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1. Ibid.
2. Various references to the attitude of the Puritans to Arminianism are made by D. Neal, The History of the Puritans (London, 1822), Vol. II.
3. Illustrative of this is the well-known anecdote that when asked what the Arminians held, an orthodox divine answered, "All the best bishoprics and deaneries in England!"

William Laud.[1] Laud became a powerful figure when Charles I, who had gained the throne in 1625, entrusted him with the department of ecclesiastical affairs. The charge of Arminianism and Popery was soon levelled against the future Archbishop. A royal declaration procured by him in order to check the controversies which arose from the preaching of the doctrine of predestination, raised clamours from the orthodox Calvinists. This declaration, issued in 1628, prohibited all bishops and priests of the Church of England from preaching or printing any interpretation of the Articles of the Church which was not in accordance with the literal and grammatical sense of the Articles.[2]

This declaration was seen as another attempt by Laud to give encouragement and opportunity to the Arminians to propagate their erroneous doctrine by suppressing all orthodox books. A petition against this declaration was presented to the king requesting the revocation of the declaration by which they "were deterred from preaching the Saving doctrines of Gods Free Grace in Election and Predestination".[3] The petition never reached the king but a discussion in the House of Commons generated much heat and Laud was accused of being not orthodox, nor sound in religion.[4]

That Laud could be termed an Arminian is beyond dispute. Even

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1. There are various biographies on the life of Laud. Though old, the best from a documentary point of view are, P. Heylyn, Cyprianus Anglicus (London, 1668); J.P. Lawson, The Life and Times of William Laud (London, 1829), 2 Vols.
2. For the text of this Declaration, see P. Heylyn, op. cit., pp. 188-189.
3. Ibid., p. 190. Italics in the work of Heylyn.
4. Lawson, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 458.

for a sympathetic biographer he was "the Arminian Bishop Laud."[1] In England he was persona non grata in the eyes of the orthodox Calvinists. In Scotland he was even more in disrepute due to his attempts to Anglicize the Church of Scotland. He, more than anybody else, advanced the episcopal practices in Scotland and on account of his actions in England which were interpreted as opposing Calvinism, he could not expect to meet with respect and admiration in Scotland.

Arminianism in progress.

When Holland was preparing for the Synod of Dort in its struggle against Arminianism, and when England was experiencing the impact of liberal theology, Scotland was not going to remain unaffected. A movement towards a more flexible and "humanized" theology made itself felt in the country of John Knox and Andrew Melville. This new trend showed itself as a reaction against strict, local Calvinism, and received an external incentive, in Scotland's case, from France, Holland, and England. It is very difficult to assess the various influences, but it does not seem incorrect to say that England was the prime source of Scotland's Arminianism.

Of this tendency nothing was felt in Scotland at the time of the Synod of Dort. At the General Assembly of Aberdeen held two years

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1. Ibid., p. 468. Italics in the work of Lawson.

earlier than the Synod of Dort, a new Confession was drawn up for the purpose of superceding the Confession of 1560.[1] This Confession of 1616 reveals nothing whatsoever of a liberal theology. On the contrary, the new one was even more unbending than that of 1560. There is no need to differ from the scholar who expressed the opinion that "in this Confession there is an advance in strict Calvinistic orthodoxy. Opinion which could have been freely held under the Scottish Confession could not have been maintained under that of Aberdeen."[2]

Significant is the Aberdeen Confession's view on predestination. Here not only the belief is expressed that men are fore-ordained to eternal life, but also that the angels were elected in Christ, which is an extention of the mediatory work of Christ unknown to the Confession of 1560. Furthermore, not only election is mentioned, but also its counterpart, reprobation. Reprobating, according to the Aberdeen Confession, is not merely a passing over of some, but an absolute appointment to eternal condemnation.

With this Confession which never became one of the confessional documents of the Church of Scotland due to the policy of King James for closer union between the English and Scottish Churches, Scotland moved into line with England which drew up the Lambeth Articles in 1595 and with the Netherlands which issued the Canons of Dort in 1619.

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1. D. Calderwood, op. cit., Vol. VII, pp. 233-242 gives the text of the new Confession in full.
2. Milroy, op. cit., p. 199.

All three confessional documents were reaffirmations of the orthodox Calvinist view on predestination and salvation. A historical difference is that the Lambeth Articles and Canons of Dort originated as a reaction against liberal theology, but this cannot be said of the Aberdeen Confession.

In 1618, the same year in which the Synod of Dort was to assemble to give judgment on the Arminian issue, an Assembly was held at Perth, the decisions of which contributed largely to the severe judgment on episcopacy and Arminianism twenty years later.[1] The decisions of the Assembly were a further step of the king to bring the Church of Scotland in conformity with the Church of England. The adoption of the Assembly of the well-known Five Articles[2] was the high water mark of James's liturgical policy, but it was no less a serious miscalculation on his part, for as a historian remarked, "one result of the appearance of the Five Articles was to crystallise opposition to any alteration in the liturgy."[3] This statement is true, but the effects of the Five Articles spread even further for they generated resistance to all Anglican innovations, whether liturgical or dogmatical, and straightened

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1. Full details of this Assembly and its proceedings are given by Calderwood, op. cit., Vol. VII, pp. 289-342.

2. The Five Articles required (1) that the sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ should be received kneeling, (ii) that this sacrament might be administered to the sick privately, (iii) that baptism might be administered privately when necessary, (iv) that children eight years old should be presented to the bishop for confirmation, and (v) that certain days connected with Christ's life and death should be duly commemorated.

3. Donaldson, op. cit., p. 209.

the way for the subsequent abolishment of practices and theology to which the episcopal clergy adhered.

The alterations attempted by the Five Articles were not of a doctrinal nature, neither did the Articles encourage Arminianism in one way or another. There was no connection whatsoever with the decisions of the Synod of Dort, but according to John Spottiswoode, archbishop of St. Andrews, who presided at the Perth Assembly, the opposers of the Five Articles deliberately made use of the even dates and the same number of articles of both Assemblies to strengthen their own position. They did this, the Archbishop asserted, by proclaiming the false report "among the vulgar sort" that the Synod of Dort had condemned the Five Articles of the Synod of Perth, but the falsehood was revealed, and the connection between Perth and Dort confuted.[1]

Arminianism made little progress in Scotland till after the ratification of the Five Articles of Perth by Parliament in 1621 when the prelatic party felt that they had become more or less rooted. From then on they ventured to disseminate their opinions openly. Baillie related how the "unhappy seeds of Arminius" sprung up in St. Andrews, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Glasgow, the four University cities of Scotland. He specifically mentioned James Wedderburn who became Professor of Divinity in St. Mary's College, St. Andrews, in

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1. J. Spotswood, The History of the Church of Scotland (London, 1655), p. 540.

1617, and not long afterwards "did stuffe his dictates to the young students in Divinity with these errours."[1]

In 1629 the University of Edinburgh encountered the force of Arminianism when Thomas Sydserff and John Maxwell, described as "the two most ambitious of the clergy of Edinburgh at that time",[2] nominated their choice for the principalship of the University. For this purpose they put up as candidate a certain Robert Monteith who had taught Philosophy for some time at Saumur. He was reputed to be well-known for his attachment to Arminianism. Three Calvinist ministers who had no objection to episcopacy, vigorously opposed Monteith's nomination and at last succeeded in getting James Fairly appointed on 24th July, 1629.[3]

Archbishop William Laud, more than any other, was instrumental in propagating Arminian views, not only in England, but also in Scotland. This he did, as one scholar saw it, "through his influence rather than through his arguments . . . and it was soon discovered that the surest path to preferment in either church was, to espouse his favourite tenets."[4] At the same time Laud was regarded with much more than

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1. R. Baillie, Ladensium Autokatakrisis, The Canterburians Self-Conviction, (Amsterdam, 1640), p. 11.
2. A. Bower, History of the University of Edinburgh (Edinburgh, 1817), Vol. I, p. 171.
3. Ibid., p. 172.
4. J. Lee, Lectures on the History of the Church of Scotland, ed. W. Lee (Edinburgh, 1860), Vol. II, p. 226.

suspicion by many Scottish ministers. In their eyes Laud was not only the embodiment of an Arminian spirit but also the manifestation of a Romanizing proclivity.[1] As Rome was at that time making a deliberate attempt to extend her sphere of influence in England, Laud's attempts to bring the Church of Scotland and the Church of England closer to each other was met with real anxiety and resolute disapproval from many in Scotland.[2]

The clergymen who were consecrated as bishops during the four or five years preceding the Assembly of 1638, did nothing to ease the anxiety or to alleviate the resentment. John Maxwell, who as minister in Edinburgh had shown his affinity to Arminianism as mentioned above, preached a sermon in the same city in 1630, of which it is said, was "the new theology at its best."[3] In 1633 he was consecrated and appointed bishop of Ross.

William Forbes became bishop of Edinburgh in 1634. In the

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1. Wodrow recalled John Row's opinion on Laud, i.e. "If ye part Laud's religion in four, two parts will be found Arminian, a third part Popery and scarce a fourth part Protestant." Wodrow himself went even further in saying that "any man may think it ominous that the Bishop of Canterbury, alterius orbis papa, his name VVILL. LaVD is just 666, the number of the name of the beast." Selections from Wodrow's Biographical Collections, ed. R. Lippe (Aberdeen, 1890), p. 254.

2. D.S. Hopkirk, "A Study of Accommodation movements between Presbytery and Episcopacy in the Seventeenth Century in Scotland, England and Ireland", unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1946, dwells on this.

3. Mathieson, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 330.

appointment and promotion of bishops during this time, it was considered to be a ground for disqualification to be in disagreement with Laud's ecclesiastical and dogmatical views. This is the reason suggested by Wodrow why William Forbes and not Adam Bellenden[1], Bishop of Dunblane, was elected bishop of Edinburgh when that bishopric became vacant. Wodrow was convinced that the discrimination was partly due to Bellenden's refusal to accept the English Liturgy, "but," he continued, "the great point was that of doctrine . . . I guess the Bishop of Dunblaine had a sermon in the old strain of the doctrine of the Church of Scotland and probably against the Papisticall and Arminian doctrines . . . "[2] John Row, the seventeenth century historian and contemporary of William Forbes, was in no doubt that Forbes preached "unsound heterodoxe doctrine."[3] He recorded that Forbes had preached inter alia; that "Christ died for all, intentionablie to redeem all; - there is Universal grace; - the Saints may fall from grace finallie and totallie . . . "[4] Such theological views were not likely to receive enthusiastic applause in Scotland.

In the same way, the other episcopal appointments caused grave concern. It was not against bishops as such that the growing aversion

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1. His name is also written Ballantyne or Bannatyne.
2. Selections from Wodrows Biographical Collections, pp. 119-120. Biographical details of William Forbes on pp. 245-269.
3. J. Row, The History of the Kirk of Scotland from the year 1558 to August 1637 (Edinburgh, 1842), p. 372.
4. Ibid.

was directed but against their practices and preaching. That a number of the younger prelates harboured Arminian sentiments is beyond doubt. One historian went even further in asserting that "all the ritualistic prelates, especially Wedderburn, were avowed Arminians",[1] and another expressed it as his opinion that the younger bishops "set themselves to emulate Laud, and almost surpassed him in their ardent advocacy of Laud."[2]

These statements on the Arminianism of the bishops in Scotland, although not free from exaggeration, are to a great extent confirmed by a supplication prepared for the attention of the king. A part of this petition, drawn up in 1634, reads:

> There is now a generall feare of some innovation intended in essentiall poynts of religion; and that this apprehension is much increased by the reports of an allowance given in Ingland for printing of books full of Poperie and Arminianisme, and by preaching of Arminianisme in this countrey without censure . . . 3

The king's indifference to the plea not "to introduce, upon the doctrine or discipline of this our mother Kirk, any thing not compatible with the honour and freedome thereof",[4] did nothing to diminish the deepening disapproval.

Undoubtedly, Arminianism acquired some ground in Scotland. Among

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1. Mathieson, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 330.
2. W.M. Hetherington, History of the Church of Scotland (Edinburgh, 1848), Vol. I, p. 264.
3. Row, op. cit., pp. 377-378.
4. Ibid., p. 381.

the many who watched with anxiety the propagation and progress of the liberal theology was Samuel Rutherford.[1] In addition to his public testimony against what he believed to be a divergence from the true doctrine of the Reformed Church, he copiously discussed and mercilessly attacked the teachings of the Arminians in a book published in Amsterdam in 1636. This learned work, Exercitationes Apologeticae pro Divina Gratia, caused profound indignation among the bishops because, as one historian interpreted it, "the arguments in that book did cut the sinews of Arminianism."[2] This made "the Arminian Bishops to gnaw their tongues and gnash their teeth for bitterness and indignation of spirit, but they could make no answer to it," commented another writer.[3] In June 1636, Rutherford was summoned before the High Commission Court for non-conformity, for preaching against the Perth Articles, and for writing this book. That the latter was the real ground for the summons was the opinion of Rutherford himself. He expressed this in one of his letters, saying, "The cause that ripened their hatred was my book against the Arminians, whereof they accused me on those three days I appeared before them."[4] He was banished to Aberdeen, at that time a

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1. There are various biographies on Rutherford, e.g. J. Murray, The life of Samuel Rutherford (Edinburgh, 1884),; A. Thomson, Samuel Rutherford (Edinburgh, 1884); R. Gilmour, Samuel Rutherford (Edinburgh, 1904).
2. A. Stevenson, The History of the Church and State of Scotland (Edinburgh, 1754), Vol. I, p. 149.
3. Row, op. cit., p. 396.
4. Letters of Samuel Rutherford, ed. A.A. Bonar, (Edinburgh, 1891), p. 141.

stronghold of episcopal and liberal theological views. There Robert Baron, one of the Aberdeen Doctors, according to Rutherford's own testimony, often disputed with him about Arminian controversies.[1]

Another controversy which assumed serious dimensions was taking place simultaneously. In 1637 the Scottish Book of Common Prayer appeared, but not without reason it became known as Laud's Liturgy.[2] Without elaborating now on its origin and contents, it is sufficient to say that John Maxwell, bishop of Ross, and James Wedderburn, bishop of Dunblane, were instrumental in the preparing thereof. This new Liturgy evoked widespread anger, manifested by an avalanche of petitions for its withdrawal. One of them, a lengthy supplication signed by nobility and clergy, stated that "this new Book of Common Prayer is urged and introduced in a way which this kirk hath never been aquainted with, and containeth many very material points contrary to . . . the religion and form of worship established . . . since the reformation."[3] The unsympathetic response to these petitions caused further unrest, protests, riots, and even bodily attacks on some of the bishops and members of the Privy Council.[4]

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1. Ibid., p. 239.
2. Wm. McMillan, "The Anglican Book of Common Prayer in the Church of Scotland, R.S.C.H.S. (Edinburgh, 1932), Vol. IV, pp. 138-149, and H. Watt, "William Laud and Scotland" R.S.C.H.S., (Glasgow, 1941), Vol. VII, pp. 171-190, discuss this issue in more detail.
3. The Register of the Privy Council of Scotland, series II, Vol. VI, p. 699.
4. Stevenson, op. cit., Vol. II, Chapter I, describes the commotions which followed the introduction of the new Liturgy in St. Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh on 23rd July, 1637.

This tense situation lasted throughout the second half of 1637 and even the new year brought no conciliation between the conflicting parties. What 1638 did bring, was a series of counter moves by the antagonists of the various innovations in the church. The first of these counter-actions was the National Covenant, and the last, in 1638, was the General Assembly. The National Covenant, a document drawn up by Alexander Henderson,[1] minister at Leuchars, and Archibold Johnston of Wariston was a call both to attention and to action. It recalled the religious heritage of Scotland and recapitulated the errors of Rome, and it called upon the country to resist the innovations and evils introduced in the church to the "ruine of the true Reformed Religion, and of our Liberties, Lawes and Estates."[2] The Covenant having been read, was subscribed by leading nobilities and barons on 28th February, 1638, in Greyfriars Church in Edinburgh. Ministers and commons signed the next day, and soon thereafter copies were carried to towns and villages throughout the country and offered -sometimes with compulsion - for subscription.[3]

It is significant that the Covenant did not condemn episcopal government. Donaldson is of the opinion that "it was obviously the intention to revert to the moderate episcopalian regime which had

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1. A biography by J.P. Thomson, Alexander Henderson, the Covenanter, (Edinburgh, 1912), is one of the more satisfactory works on Henderson.
2. Records of the Kirk of Scotland, ed. A. Peterkin, (Edinburgh, 1838), Vol. I, p. 12. (Infra abbreviated: R.K.S.)
3. Stevenson, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 284-294.

existed during most of the period between the Reformation and King Charles's innovations."[1] Be it so, it was also obviously the intention to resist and remove "innovations and evils". Resulting from these actions and reactions, the stage was prepared for the meeting of the General Assembly in Glasgow where such an intention was to be executed in no uncertain way.

Ante-Assembly Activities.

The Covenanters now eager not only to fulfil their promise contained in the Covenant to purge the kirk of novelties and evil, but also desiring to settle the ecclesiastical controversies, insisted on calling a church assembly. They found several "causes noted by divines for the utility and necessity of councils."[2] These reasons, sufficient to convene a church assembly were:

(1) for suppressing heresy and controversies about points of doctrine,

(2) for redressing abuses and enormities,

(3) for appointing, restoring or preserving the discipline of the Church,

(4) for the peace and unity of the church,

(5) for the mutual comfort and benefit by acquainting each other with the state of the particular congregations,

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1. Donaldson, op. cit., p. 314.
2. Stevenson, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 390.

(6) for the confirmation of truth to those in doubt,

(7) for restoring faithful pastors who were thrusted out by adversaries of the church, and

(8) for punishing heretics or those who introduce innovations into the church.[1]

These justifications for convening ecclesiastical assemblies, constituted in fact a plan of action for the forthcoming assembly. The Covenanters were thoroughly convinced that all the above-mentioned abuses, shortcomings, and evils were prevalent in the Church. One specifically mentioned was that "the doctrine is corrupted by Arminian and popish errors."[2] Intimately connected with this was the further complaint that "Arminian and popish teachers both in kirks and schools are rather rewarded and preferred than censured and controlled."[3]

Considering the determination of Scotland to have an assembly at allcost, the king could not refuse without losing face and friends. King Charles consented, stipulating that it should be a purely clerical body, but the more ardent Covenanters insisted on the presence of elders with voting right at the assembly. This being accomplished, the result was a packed assembly.[4] The election of elders as commissioners to the

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1. Ibid., pp. 390-391.
2. Ibid., p. 391. Italics in the work of Stevenson.
3. Ibid., pp. 391-392. Italics in the work of Stevenson.
4. According to the list of "commissioners from the presbyteries both ministers and ruling-elders", 140 ministers and 95 elders attended the Glasgow Assembly. It is not without significance that the Presbytery of St. Andrews - St. Andrews being resolutely opposed to the Covenant - was represented by 3 ministers and 7 elders. Stevenson, op. cit., pp. 474-481.

assembly was one of the main reasons for considering it unlawful and devoid of authority.[1] The Tables in Edinburgh who exercised the power were also accused by the opposers of the assembly that they had acted in a dishonest, partial and illegal way by submitting private instructions to every presbytery "prelimiting the election of members to the assembly."[2] This was denied by the Assembly, but that all attempts were made to constitute an assembly sympathetic to the ideals of the Covenanters, seems undeniable.

Four weeks before the opening of the General Assembly, the Presbytery of Edinburgh considered a complaint against the bishops. A declaration in the form of "a terrible lybell"[3] was directed against "the pretended Archbishops and Bishops in the Kingdome" and was signed by noblemen, barons, ministers, burgesses and commons. They desired:

> That the Church may bee restored to her priviledges and liberties, and freed from manifold scandals, from the corrupters of Doctrine with Poperie and Arminianisme, of the Sacraments with Superstition and Wil-worship,,and of the Discipline with tyrannie, and from the overthrowers of the peace of this Church and Kingdome by their usurpations and lies, their violent humours, and falsehood for their owne worldly ends, may be tried and censured accordingly. 4

From this it is clear that deviation from sound doctrine was one of the general charges against the bishops. What the authors of the libel

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1. A Large Declaration concerning the Late Tumults in Scotland from their First Originals (London, 1639), pp. 265-267.
2. Stevenson, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 547; A Large Declaration, pp. 281-284.
3. J. Gordon, History of Scots Affairs from MDCXXXVII to MDCXLI, eds. J. Robertson and G. Grub for the Spalding Club (Aberdeen, 1841), Vol. I, p. 126.
4. A Large Declaration, p. 210. The full complaint is found on pp. 209-219. See also J. Spalding, Memorialls of the Trubles in Scotland and in England A.D. 1624 - A.D. 1645 ed. J. Stuart for the Spalding Club (Aberdeen, 1850), Vol. I, pp. 116-117; Gordon, op. cit., pp. 126-128.

understood by Arminianism is clarified when they describe it as the teaching of conditional election, free-will, resistibility of effectual grace, the universality of Christ's death, the merit of it in heaven and hell, and the apostacy of the saints.[1]

On 24th October, 1638, the Presbytery of Edinburgh resolved to refer the complaint to the General Assembly to be held in Glasgow on 21st November. At the same time the Presbytery issued the following statement:

> And we ordaine the publishing of this complaint, and of our reference of it to the Assemblie, to be fully read by all the Pastors of the Presbyterie upon the next Sabbath before noone out of their Pulpits with a publike warning and cytation to the offendants complained upon . . . to be present at the said Assemblie, to answer to this complaint in generall, and to the particular heads of it, (and) to undergo the triall and censure of it. 2

Copies of the said complaint were presented to Presbyteries within the boundaries of which the bishops had their cathedrals or residences. The Presbytery was then required to serve the complaint on the particular bishop.[3] Several Presbyteries also prepared charge-sheets against ministers under their jurisdiction who "had been scandalous in their

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1. A Large Declaration, pp. 215-216.
2. A Large Declaration, pp. 219-220. The discussion of the question whether the actions of the Presbytery of Edinburgh were ultra vires and ecclesiastically illegal because the Presbytery had no jurisdiction over the bishops, falls outside the scope of this study. The Large Declaration, pp. 220-221 and Gordon, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 126, maintained that the proceedings were unlawful. Stevenson, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 456-461, argued against this.
3. Stevenson, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 460.

conversation or had vented Arminian or popish doctrine."[1] Some of these cases were dealt with directly by the respective Presbyteries, but others were referred to the General Assembly. A typical case was the one of John Crichton, minister of Paisley, against whom his parishioners filed a complaint. One of the charges was preaching of Arminianism, and in particular, universal redemption. The Presbytery referred the complaint to the ensuing General Assembly to pronounce sentence.[2]

Initial Proceedings.

On Wednesday, 21st November, 1638, the General Assembly convened for the first time since the Assembly of Perth in 1618. Multitudes thronged the streets of Glasgow so that the delegates to the Assembly could hardly gain access to the building without the assistance of the magistrates and townguards. Alexander Henderson who was well fitted to preserve and perpetuate the traditions of John Knox and Andrew Melville was elected to occupy the moderator's chair.[3]

At the sixth session the gloomy destiny of the bishops who were summoned to appear in order that they might be "tried and censured", was heralded by the Assembly's initial proceeding. The bishops did not

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1. Stevenson, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 461.
2. J.C. Lees, The Abbey of Paisley (Paisley, 1878), pp. 288-294.
3. Stevenson, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 470-471; R. Baillie, Letters and Journals, Vol. I, pp. 123-128.

answer this call to present themselves to the Assembly, but caused a protestation to be sent. This remonstrance was read but the Assembly rejected it with contra-arguments and with contempt.[1] In this statement the bishops made it clear that they considered the Assembly convened at Glasgow to be "most unlawful and disorderly, and their proceedings void and null in law."[2]

Only two of the many objections of the bishops against the Assembly need be recalled here. These two can be considered as the essence of the protestation, while at the same time, the replies to these objections give a remarkable insight in the extent of the Assembly's identification with the Synod of Dort. These two objections were: (1) that the Assembly as a party was already unfavourably disposed towards the bishops and could not act as an impartial judge, (2) that lay-elders should not have a decisive vote in the Assembly, for such a practice would not be consistent with Scripture, with the ancient Christian Church or with reason.[3]

In replying to the first reason for opposing the Assembly, the Assembly pointed out that the same objection had been raised by the Arminians at the Synod of Dort, and that Dort had answered that if such

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1. The Declinatour and Protestation of some-times Pretended Bishops Presented in Face of the Last Assembly, Refuted and found Futile, but full of Insolent Reproaches and Bold Assertions (Edinburgh, 1639); A Large Declaration, pp. 248-255.
2. A Large Declaration, p. 249.
3. Ibid., pp. 254-255.

an argument was to be accepted, not even Arius, Nestorius and Eutychus could have been condemned as heretics.[1] The Moderator, commenting on this, read from the Acta Synodi of Dort the opinion of the delegates from Great Britain, namely, that although members of the Synod had previously expressed themselves to be against Arminian doctrine, they could nevertheless sit as judges because they were lawfully called by the church for that purpose.[2] The obvious conclusion was that where Dort led, Glasgow could follow.

Walter Balcanqual who had been present at the famous Synod of 1618/1619, could not consent to the drawing of such a complete parallel between Dort and Glasgow. He argued that there were two points of marked difference. The first was that the matters discussed at the Synod of Dort were of a doctrinal nature while those before the Assembly of Glasgow were concerned with church government. This required a different approach, for as Balcanqual maintained, points of doctrine were unalterable, but church policy could be changed at the will of the church. Balcanqual asserted that the controversy with the bishops was not on doctrinal points, and that there was no necessity of prematurely declaring any judgment as was done by members of the

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1. Stevenson, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 527.
2. A Large Declaration, p. 272; Gordon, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 176.

Assembly. The second difference which Balcanqual saw was that while delegates to the Synod of Dort had prematurely expressed their views by discoursing, writing, and preaching, they had not by any judicial act or the equivalent thereof, such as a covenant, bound themselves against the accused group as was done by delegates to the Assembly of Glasgow. Thus, according to Balcanqual, the members of the Assembly absolutely disqualified themselves from being judges of the bishops.[1]

At this point the Moderator, under the impression that Balcanqual had asserted that the Five Articles discussed at Dort were of a fundamental nature, stated it as his opinion that they were not fundamental and that the Synod of Dort had not declared the Arminians to be heretical, but only erroneous.[2] This moderate view of the Moderator was not shared by the whole Assembly. In this respect, the Large Declaration made the following observation:

> There were many ministers of the Assembly, who did hold them to bee fundamental points and most unchristianly and uncharitably had preached, that the Remonstrants tenets did destroy the very foundation of faith; and whosoever sided with them in the five Articles, could not possibly bee saved. 3

Robert Baillie thought it "rash to make all the articles of Arminius's errors fundamental," but at the same time he considered

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1. A Large Declaration, pp. 272-274; Gordon, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 176-178; R. Baillie, Letters and Journals, Vol. I, pp. 140-141; R.K.S., Vol. I, pp. 141-142. There is a difference of opinion whether Balcanqual had in fact said that the errors of the Arminians were fundamental. Of the sources quoted above, the Large Declaration, p. 274, and Gordon, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 178 maintain that Balcanqual did not assert that the five points were fundamental.
2. R.K.S., Vol. I, p. 142.
3. A Large Declaration, p. 142.

the Moderator "incircumspect to absolve all the Arminian errors without a distinction of the cryme of heresie".[1] There were also others who were inclined to a harsher verdict on Arminianism. Such an opinion was expressed by David Dalgliesh of Cupar, who replied that "our Bishops were mainlie challenged for Arminianisme and Poperie, which the Doctor acknowledgeed to be fundamentall errors."[2]

Whether this was acknowledged by Balcanqual or not, the point here is that Dalgliesh found himself in agreement with such a view on the fundamental character of the Arminian deviations. One cannot fail to see why a group in the Assembly wanted it to be placed beyond all doubt that the differences between the Arminians and the Synod of Dort were essential and incisive in nature. This dominating group consisted of two sections, but they were one in their judgment on Arminianism as fundamental errors or even heresy. One part of the group adhered to this view because they were convinced that Arminian doctrine was detrimental to the foundations of faith; the other part propagated this view because they feared to minimize the gravity of the errors of Arminianism would lead to a less severe sentence on the bishops.

The other important objection, viz. against the presence of voting ruling elders, was also dealt with by the Assembly. In the official reply references were made to the ecclesiastical position in France and Holland.[3] The Moderator also dwelt on this objection and

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1. R. Baillie, Letters and Journals, Vol. I, p. 140.
2. Ibid.
3. Stevenson, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 524.

directed the attention of the Assembly to the Synod of Dort, where the elders took a responsible part in the proceedings. This Balcanqual readily admitted, but added that the elders at Dort were men "learned and judicious".[1] Balcanqual was not sure at all that such a testimony could be given in favour of the Scottish elders. The Large Declaration, in which the hand of Balcanqual could be seen,[2] referred to the trial of David Mitchell where all the witnesses were lay-men, and pictured them as "men of such meane and ordinary understanding that it was improbable, if not impossible, that they should understand the doctrines wherewith he was charged."[3]

Although the common saying, scratch a Scotsman and you might find a theologian under his skin, could have been true of many seventeenth century lay-elders, Balcanqual's complaint was not without ground. To many the word Arminian was enough to evoke emotions of dislike which could easily colour or obscure their judgment. This would undoubtedly also apply to many ministers, but their theological training would enable them to discern between the mere designation of and the theological attributes of Arminianism. This ability to discriminate would lead the theologian to a more balanced judicium. Whether all desired to be guided by dogmatical criteria cannot be asserted.

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1. R.K.S., Vol. I, p. 144.
2. Gordon, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 179 confirms that Balcanqual had a "great hand" in drawing up the Great Declaration.
3. A Large Declaration, p.206.

To conclude from the many references to Dort that the Glasgow Assembly considered themselves to be virtually a second Synod of Dort, is an overstatement, but it is not to be denied that in many respects they desired to walk in the footsteps of the great Synod of 1618. From the outset it was decided on a proposal of Robert Baillie to "follow the course of Dort", at least as far as some matters of procedure were concerned.[1] This following of Dort is in no way amazing. During the previous twenty years no General Assembly was held in Scotland. Even the six Assemblies which were convened during the years 1606 to 1618 were declared by the Assembly of 1638 as having no ecclesiastical authority, and as unfree, unlawful, and null and void.[2] On the other hand the memory of the Synod of Dort and the struggle against Arminianism was still vivid, and as Scotland felt herself threatened by the same danger, it was natural that the Glasgow Assembly should turn to the Synod of Dort in which they saw an example of correct procedure and in which was found a yard-stick of sound doctrine.[3]

The most important of these household matters were the trials against the bishops and ministers. At the eighth session the complaint

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1. R. Baillie, Letters and Journals, Vol. I, p. 123.
2. R.K.S., Vol. I, p. 24, pp. 161-162.
3. It cannot, therefore, be agreed that "whatever the Synod of Dort, had or had not said or done, really mattered little to the Assembly" since "the Assembly had already determined to be master in its own house," N. Meldrum, "The General Assembly of the Church in Scotland in the year 1638", unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1924, p. 95.

against the bishops was read. The libel against Thomas Sydserff, bishop of Galloway, containing the complaints common to all the bishops as well as a number of particulars appertaining to himself, was the first to be placed before the Assembly.[1] It was decided by the Assembly that some of the complaints were so obvious that they needed no or little proof, but others, such as errors in doctrine, would require special investigation and sufficient evidence to substantiate the claim.[2]

On 1st December, at the tenth session, the Assembly paid attention to the various complaints against a number of ministers. Evidence was heard that David Mitchell, minister in Edinburgh, had for a long time preached "Arminianisme in all the heads and sundrie poynts of Poperie."[3] Patrick Panter, Divinity Professor At St. Andrews, was also one of the accused. Baillie described him as "one of the best poets" and a man with a "bonny spirit", but one who should never have been a Divinity Professor.[4] The charge against him was that he had disseminated "many erroneous and Papisticall Poynts of doctrine."[5] Baillie's Journal explains what these charges were, namely, adhering to popish views on justification, approaching Pelagianism in the conception of sin, and maintaining "other

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1. R.K.S., Vol. I, p. 151; R. Baillie, Letters and Journals, Vol. I, p. 148.
2. R.K.S., Vol. I, p. 152.
3. R. Baillie, Letters and Journals, Vol. I, p. 149.
4. R. Baillie, Letters and Journals, Vol. I, p. 149.
5. R.K.S., Vol. I, p. 155.

points of Arminianisme".[1] On the same day the process of Alexander Gladstanes of St. Andrews was read. Baillie's picture of him as "a monster of drunkenness and atheistick profanitie" gives at the same time the sum total of the charges against him.[2]

The processes being heard by the Assembly, the Moderator thought it fit that judgment should be postponed in order to give some ministers acquainted with the Arminian controversy, the opportunity to explain it to the Assembly.[3] The Moderator was fully aware that many of the members of the Assembly, both elders and ministers, were not familiar with all the theological differences between orthodox Calvinism and Arminianism. Indeed, after the word Arminianism had been loosely and carelessly used for some days, it became apparent that a lucid explanation of Arminianism was urgently needed.

Arminianism Elucidated.

The Moderator, during the tenth session while the case of David Mitchell was under discussion, used the occasion to note that there were two kinds of Arminianism. One was that which troubled the Low Countries and which was "nothing but the way to Socinianisme, and Socinianismus inchoatus is Arminianismus consociatus." The other kind of Arminianism

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1. R. Baillie, Letters and Journals, Vol. I, p. 149.
2. Ibid., p. 149.
3. Ibid., p. 150.

was that which was advocated in England and Scotland, and directed to popery, or was, as the Moderator put it, "inchoatus papismus". He lamented the fact that the doctrine taught by the ministers of the Kirk of Scotland, had become polluted by Arminianism and popery to such an extent that the only factor required to complete the process of deterioration was the Pope himself.[1]

This was only the beginning of the discussion of Arminianism. At the next session the argumentation and refutation of Arminianism assumed a more theological character than the short introduction given by the Moderator. David Dickson,[2] at that time minister at Irvine but afterwards Professor of Divinity in Glasgow and in Edinburgh, opened the debate with "a long harangue of Arminianisme."[3] He maintained that the whole erroneous structure of the Arminians rested on four pillars, namely,

(1) that their views on election made man the choser of God,

(2) that Christ's death opened a universal possibility of salvation intended by God's grace and which extended to all,

(3) that in their attempt to safeguard man from being conceived of as a stock or block, they put the matter of salvation in man's own hand,

(4) that they denied the doctrine of perseverance. In this respect

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1. R.K.S., Vol. I, p. 155.
2. For biographical details, see H.M.B. Reid, The Divinity Professors in the University of Glasgow (Glasgow, 1923), pp. 1-74.
3. R. Baillie, Letters and Journals, Vol. I, p. 150.

it is recorded that Dickson had said:

> They sever poor simple man and setts him alone with the staff of his frie will tottering in his hand, and the Divell, the world, and sin tempting him; and then they dispute with him, saying, that there is no assurance of perseverance, and that the saints may fall away and all the rest of it. 1

He elaborated somewhat on these erroneous views and then proceeded to state what he called "our doctrine". This doctrine claims that there is a number elected by God for his special purpose. This election does not rest on foreseen good works but solely on God's will and grace. To redeem this number of chosen ones, Christ came. Dickson agreed that "our Lord made no blind block," but at the same time Christ's death does not offer salvation to everybody, for he "had his scheepe before his eyes and was content to lay downe his lyfe for them." The power of the Gospel of grace enables man, while keeping himself in freedom of will, to turn to God to receive the mediator. Those bought by Christ will never be forsaken by him, but he will lead them through all doubts, difficulties and temptations.[2]

To Dickson the preaching of error was, as he himself, testified, like the selling of poisoned bread that slays the eater.[3] He did his best to supply both the antidote and wholesome bread by putting before his hearers the arguments against Arminianism while outlining at the same time the orthodox doctrine. Baillie was well pleased with "the

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1. R.K.S., Vol. I, p. 156.
2. R.K.S., Vol. I, pp. 157-158.
3. R.K.S., Vol. I, p. 156.

witt of the man and his dextrous expression."[1] By his graphic way of explaining and refuting Arminianism, Dickson succeeded in bringing this theological problem nearer to his audience.

Following Dickson, Andrew Ramsay, minister in Edinburgh, added his contribution to the discussion. To him the crux of the Arminian controversy was "whether our salvation runs upon the hingers of our owne will of upon Gods Grace?" His exposition on the subject of salvation was presented under five points, (1) as it is ordained, (2) as it is purchased, (3) as it is offered, (4) as it is applied, and (5) as it is perfected. Like Dickson, he stressed the point that man's salvation does not depend on foreseen faith or good works, neither on the will of man but that salvation is fastened by the golden chain of God's election, grace, and mercy.[2]

The Assembly was well satisfied with these two speeches on Arminianism, and the speakers received thanks from the chair and applause from the floor. Gordon, sceptical about the clarity of the speeches, commented somewhat sardonically on the audible approbation but possible lack of comprehension, and remarked:

> The most pairt of the ruling elders . . . with a devout ignoraince, applauded thes deep poynts with ane implicite faithe, although many doubted if all of them understood either the Arminian tenents, on the refutatorye argumentes thereof: But that was all one, they were sure to saye with the reste. 3

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1. R. Baillie, Letters and Journals, Vol. I, p. 150.
2. R.K.S., Vol. I, p. 159.
3. Gordon, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 47.

The objection raised by Balcanqual regarding the elders' lack of understanding of the doctrine in question,[1] and repeated here by Gordon, was confirmed by Baillie in his reference to the case of James Affleck.[2] The latter, a minister in the presbytery of Dundee, was acquitted, but "the gentlemen, who understood not well, thought everything here capitall heresie."[3] However, whether the whole Assembly grasped the theological distinctions or not, they were glad that the errors of the Arminians were brought to light.[4]

The Moderator in his thanks to the speakers used the occasion of stressing the two points of election and universalism. "The question is," he said, "whether we doe believe because we are chosen to faith? They say God chooses men because they believe. We say this - That we are elected comes from Gods free grace." The other much disputed point, the Moderator said, was the question of universalism. The Arminians maintain that "Christ hes died pro omnibus, for the behove and benefite of all." Against this Henderson placed the view that Christ died vice omnium "that is for all sortes, and if it be tane vice electorum, they must be saved in whose place Christ hath died."[5] If by these distinctions the Moderator had not elucidated Arminianism for the benefit of the elders, he had at least supported the two preceding discourses in emphasizing the erroneous ways of the Arminians.

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1. Vide supra, p. 80.
2. Vide infra, p. 93.
3. R. Baillie, Letters and Journals, Vol. I, p. 154.
4. R.K.S., Vol. I, p. 159.
5. R.K.S., Vol. I, p. 159.

With the warning voices of Dickson, Ramsay, and Henderson still ringing in their ears, the Assembly's attention was again drawn to the case of David Mitchell. His process having been read and briefly discussed, the Moderator declared:

> This is a sufficient ground of a sentence against him, that his doctrine is the doctrine of the remonstrances that they avowed at the Counsell of Dort, contrare to the doctrine of all the reformed Kirkes, whose Commissioners were there; and consequently to the doctrine of the Kirk of Scotland, for he defends universall grace, resistabilitie of Grace - efficacie of Christ's death - apostacie of the Saints; so he is both convict of heresie, and obstinatelie glories in the venting of it; and so in respect of his false doctrine and declinatour, merito ejiciendus. 1

This statement is quoted here in full because it brings two significant points of view to light. The first is that the Moderator considered the charge of Arminianism a sufficient ground for condemnation. He went even further by asserting that the charge of Arminianism is tantamount to a charge of "heresie." This assertion is a far cry from his statement of a few days before that the Arminians were only erroneous and not heretical. Was he under pressure from men such as Dalgliesh, or had he become convinced of the heretical quality of their teachings while listening to the speeches of Dickson and Ramsay? While the answer remains unknown, the sudden change of attitude of Henderson remains remarkable.

Another aspect brought into prominence by the Moderator's statement is the position of Scotland in relation to Dort. Not only

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1. Ibid., p. 160.

did the Moderator consider it necessary and just to condemn Arminianism in the same way as Dort had done it, but he also construed the professed doctrine of the Kirk of Scotland to be anti-Arminian due to the fact that her commissioner was present at the Synod of Dort. Although Balcanqual, appointed by the king to represent the Church of Scotland at the Synod, had not been commissioned by the Kirk, and had not reported to the Kirk on the proceedings and decisions, the Moderator implied that the Church of Scotland had on account of the presence and standpoint of Scotland's representative, accepted the decisions of Dort and had virtually incorporated their dogmatical views in their doctrinal system. It also seems likely that Henderson was inclined to the thought that the Synod of Dort was ecumenical, and its dogmatical views more than only guide-lines. This view manifested itself again later in the course of the Assembly's proceedings and also in following Assemblies where clergymen on trial were required to subscribe to the Canons of Dort.[1]

After the Moderator's summary of the charges against David Mitchell, the Assembly pronounced judgment by voting unanimously for his deposition.[2]

The Assembly was yet to hear another discourse on the rise, growth and errors of Arminianism. This time the speaker was Robert Baillie. He would have gladly been spared the doubtful honour, for as he recorded

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1. Vide infra, pp.93-95.
2. R.K.S. Vol. I, p. 160.

himself, "Arminianisme is a deep, and large and intricat subject."[1] For the task of elucidating Arminianism, Baillie was indeed very well equipped. He had been in the fortunate habit of collecting as much material as possible on and by the Arminians in Holland, ranging from the Acta Remonstrantium to the De Deo of Coenraad Vorstius; from the Apologia Remonstrantium to the Historia Pelagiana of Gerard Vossius.[2]

On Tuesday, 4th December, Baillie delivered his long and learned discourse on Arminianism.[3] He briefly sketched the origin and progress of Arminianism in Holland and England. The beginning of Arminianism in Scotland was marked, according to him, when the English court began to meddle with the affairs of Scotland.[4] Like the Moderator, Baillie saw a difference between Dutch Arminianism and British Arminianism. He put it, however, much more crudely than Henderson when he remarked that "the Arminian spirit in Holland leads men to hell another way than here in Britaine."[5] He continued his discourse in a more theological way, by

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1. R. Baillie, Letters and Journals, Vol. I, p. 150.
2. In a letter to William Spang, Scottish Minister at Campvere, Baillie asked Spang to send him these books from Amsterdam as well as other books, R. Baillie, Letters and Journals, Vol. I, p. 10.
3. R.K.S. Vol. I, p. 161. This discourse was published as An Antidote against Arminianisme (London, 1641). A part of the preface of this book reads: "In first birth it was a speach delivered upon a short warning in the General Assembly of Glasgow, 1638 and there not mislik't. Since, that time it hath not increased much in stature." (no pagination). In 1652 the book was reprinted under the title A Scotch Antidote against the English Infection of Arminianisme.
4. R. Baillie, An Antidote against Arminianisme (London, 1641), p. 18.
5. Ibid.

stating that Dutch Arminianism inclined to Socianism while the British counterpart leaned towards Romanism.[1]

After this differentiation Baillie proceeded to explain to the Assembly the contents and meaning of the five Arminian articles which formed the substance of the discussions and decisions of Dort. At the same time he put forward the orthodox view supported and illuminated by texts from Scripture and from the writings of Augustine. In the same manner as his co-speakers on this subject, he emphasized that election had no antecedent cause in man, but was rooted in God's mercy, that Christ gave his life not for the universe as such, but only for the elect, that the grace of God quickened man's nature to make the heart and will of man responsive to His call, and that God enabled the believer to persevere to the end.[2]

All these truths, Baillie maintained, were the teaching of the Confession of the Church of Scotland. Therefore, they who preached and taught anything else were divorcing themselves from Scripture, from Augustine and from the Confession of the Kirk, and were consequently censurable.[3]

These three speeches and the Moderator's additional remarks whereby the doctrine and danger of Arminianism were elucidated by learned and

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1. Ibid., p. 20.
2. Ibid., pp. 23-83.
3. Ibid., pp. 110-112.

sincere men, offer sufficient proof that the Assembly took a serious view of the charges of Arminianism against the clergymen. This does not mean that having received more light on Arminianism, it ipso facto followed that the Assembly was induced to give the accused a fair hearing and an objective judgment. The reverse might as well have happened, namely, that the severe stress on the defect doctrine and the dreadful danger of Arminianism would lead the Assembly to discard indiscriminately everything and everybody connected with the term Arminianism.

Trials and Depositions[1]

The discourses on Arminianism, having straightened the way, the processes against the clergymen were accelerated. John Crichton, minister at Paisley, and cousin of Robert Baillie, was the first to be censured after the speech of Baillie.[2] Not less than 48 points of Arminianism and popery were listed against him. The Arminian charges included that he based election on foreknowledge, that he preached universal grace, that he maintained free will in salvation, and that he held that justifying faith might be absolutely lost.[3]

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1. This does not purport to be an exhaustive description of the trials. Fuller details to be obtained from R.K.S. Vol. I, pp. 162-180; Gordon, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 47-59, 95-102, 131-152; R. Baillie, Letters and Journals, Vol. I, pp. 150-169; Stevenson, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 608-644.
2. R.K.S., Vol. I, p. 163.
3. Gordon, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 57-58.

These views were in direct opposition to what Dickson, Ramsay, Baillie, and Henderson had described to the Assembly as scriptural and in harmony with the Confessions. There were also other charges against the Crichton, e.g. that he had said that the ecclesiastical and theological differences between churches, and between Arminians and Gomarians were but a "mouthful of moonshine" and that reconciliation could be effected. Another complaint against him was that he had "baptised a chylde on an ordinarye daye in his bedde, for lazinesse for to ryse, without any prayer, with his night cappe on."[1] How seriously the Assembly took these latter charges cannot be ascertained. But what they felt certain of was that Crichton was "ane professed Arminiane and a popish champion."[2] He was deposed from all functions of the ministry, and his place declared vacant.[3]

For another minister, James Affleck, who was also accused of holding "several poyntes of Arminianisme", the end was a more happy one.[4] Various private meetings were arranged with him in which Samuel Rutherford played a leading role in order to convince him of his erroneous ways and views. Although he managed to clear himself on most of the charges, the investigation committee was not completely satisfied. They thought it necessary to put him to another test. What they requested

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1. Ibid., p. 58.
2. The Historical Works of Sir James Balfour (Edinburgh, 1824), Vol. II, p. 308.
3. R.K.S. Vol. I, p. 163.
4. Gordon, op. cit. Vol. II, pp. 96-97.

was nothing less than subscribing the Canons of Dort.[1] That the Church of Scotland felt itself close to the Synod of Dort is not to be disputed, but for a Church which had not had an own appointed representative at the Synod, and which had not received any official report on the Synod, and which had never incorporated the Canons of Dort into their own Confessions, to expect a formal subscription to the dogmatical decisions of Dort, seems unusual if not unprecedented. But this only contributed further evidence to the already established fact that Scotland considered herself ecclesiastically and dogmatically very near to Holland and was not only willing but also eager to draw on the Dutch theological resources. In their appreciation of the Synod of Dort, they came very close to the view of holding the Synod as virtually a Reformed Ecumenical Synod with decisions transcending the boundaries of the Netherlands.

In the case of James Affleck, it is not evident whether the Canons of Dort held before him should be taken as a criterion of orthodoxy or as an ultimatum, i.e. subscription or deposition. Perhaps it was both. His dilemma could then be rendered as follows: to prove his adherence to orthodox doctrine by subscribing to the decisions of Dort, or to experience the possibility of deposition becoming a reality. Affleck's first reaction was to plead ignorance of the contents and

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1. R. Baillie, Letters and Journals, Vol. I, p. 173. It should be noted that here I am not adhering strictly to a chronological sequence of events. This "test" was put to James Affleck twelve days after his case had opened.

extent of the Acts of Dort. Whether he did in fact sign the Canons signifying his agreement with the Articles is doubtful. It seems that he did not, but instead "he offered willinglie to subscryve our Covenant, with the Assemblies decalartion," as Baillie noted in his Journal.[1] Such an arrangement substituting Dort for Edinburgh undoubtedly met with the committee's approval, because the subscription of the Covenant implied a dissociating from and a resisting of the "innovations and evils" of which Arminianism was considered as one of no mean importance.

There was, however, another minister on trial of whom it can be said with considerable certainty that he signed the Canons of Dort. He was Robert Hamilton of Lesmahagow. One of the many charges was that "he had preached Arminianisme", and in particular, universal redemption.[2] His trial was deferred until the next General Assembly at Edinburgh in 1839, where after private discussions with Rutherford and Baillie, Hamilton declared that he was willing "to subscryve the Cannons of the Synod of Dort and to revoke all his Arminian tenets that he had mentioned."[3]

There is no need here for an enumeration of all the ministers tried and deposed, nor for all the accusations against them, but the following could be mentioned briefly. John MacMath was found guilty of

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1. Ibid.
2. R.K.S. Vol. I, p. 132.
3. R.K.S. Vol. I, p. 263.

deserting his parish and of preaching Arminian doctrine, and was deposed.[1] Henry Scrimgeor, like Robert Hamilton of Lesmahagow, was penitent, "id est", remarked Gordon not without humour, "had subscrybed the Covenante," and he was pardoned.[2] In the greater part of the cases it really appears as if the aim was to draw up a list of charges as long as possible and covering all possible crimes in order to place the accused from the outset in a position as precarious as possible. The accusations against Thomas Forrester, for instance, ranged from the theological charge of maintaining "all the poyntes of Arminianisme" to the more down to earth complaint that "he commonly used to dryve his cowes through the churche to eate grasse in the churche yarde, yea, and that he had caused milk his cowes in the churche."[3] One can easily imagine that in Scotland where the cow is not looked upon as a holy animal, and the sacred places not considered a suitable haunt for such beasts, that such and similar practices by the local minister would generate a storm of protest - especially from the sexton! One cannot, however, fail to observe the triviality and often incredibility of many of the charges, not to mention the appalling list of moral offences with which so many of the ministers and bishops were charged.

With this it is time to revert to the trials of the bishops or as the Assembly called them, "pretended bishops". Being in receipt

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1. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 172; R. Baillie, Letters and Journals, Vol. I, p. 165.
2. Gordon, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 151.
3. Ibid.

of the details of the charges furnished by the respective Presbyteries within which bounds the bishops resided, or performed or neglected their duties, the Assembly proceeded to execute judgment. Thomas Sydserff, Bishop of Galloway, of whom the Assembly was convinced that beside his other faults, he had preached "false doctrine, Arminianisme and Papistrie", was deposed and excommunicated.[1] This judgment was to be followed by a long train of similar verdicts.

Even the archbishops did not escape censure. John Spottiswoode, Archbishop of St. Andrews, was the first of the two archbishops to whom the Assembly's attention was directed.[2] This seventy-three year old clergyman was found guilty, among other "crimes", of "carding and dyceing in tyme of divine service, ryding through the countrey the whole (Sabbath) day, tippling and drinking in taverns till midnight, falsifieing with his hands the acts of Aberdeen Assemblie, lyeing and slandering our old Assemblies and Covenant in his wicket book . . . "[3] Add to this the other charges of adultery, incest, and simony, the list of accusations against the aged Archbishop assumed dimensions verging on incredibility if not absurdity.

The complaint of "preaching of Arminianisme" also found its way to

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1. R.K.S. Vol. I, pp. 165-166.
2. For his life and work consult, J. Perry, "John Spottiswoode, Archbishop and Chancellor as Churchman, Historian and Theologian", unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1950.
3. R. Baillie, Letters and Journals, Vol. I, p. 155.

the charge-sheet of Spottiswoode.[1] It is, however, not proved that he was holding Arminian views. Wodrow writing in more peaceful times - for in the heat of the battle the truth is often distorted or misrepresented for the sake of gaining some partisan advantage - stated expressly that the primate did not appear to have favoured Arminianism.[2] It seems as if he acquiesced to Laud's Liturgy without accepting Laud's theological views. It would not be unjust to conclude that although Spottiswoode was not spotless in his moral conduct, he did not stray from the Calvinist Confession of his church.

On the same day the bell tolled for the Bishop of Brechin, Walter Whiterford, who was also, inter alia, found censurable on account of his "preaching of Arminian and popish tenets."[3] From there on the violent wind emanating from the Assembly shook the remaining bishops from the ecclesiastical tree. The lengthy list of misdeeds of David Lindsay, Bishop of Edinburgh, was considered weighty enough to call deposition and excommunication upon him. Adam Bellenden, Bishop of Aberdeen, previously from Dunblane who was refused the bishopric of Edinburgh because, in the opinion of Wodrow, he was not enough of an Arminian, was also deposed. Before 1616, he had been an outspoken opponent of episcopacy, but then he changed his opinion and sided with the episcopals. This "apostacy" combined with his great zeal in pressing the Canons and

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1. R.K.S. Vol. I, p. 166.
2. Life of John Spottiswoode, ed. J.F.S. Gordon, p. 498.
3. Stevenson, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 617.

Liturgy of 1637, seem to have swung the scale to his detriment.[1] John Maxwell, Bishop of Ross, was found guilty of various doctrinal misbeliefs. Evidence was given that he had defended "many grosse errors of peperye, and all the heterodoxies of the Arminians publickly both by himself and his associatts."[2]

Together with the usual charges of moral and liturgical transgressions against James Wedderburn, Bishop of Dunblane, it was also held against him that he had praised "the wryttings of papistes and Arminians", and had recommended them to his hearers.[3] Among those alleged to have been infected by his Arminian teaching were his students at St. Andrews.[4] This undoubtedly was considered a heavy count against him, but of an even more serious nature was the complaint that he had been one of the chief authors of the controversial Service Book and one who had enthusiastically implemented the innovations of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Assembly without hesitation passed the same sentence - deposition.[5]

The Bishop of Orkney, George Graham, was under heavy moral charges, "yet for his mislyke of their late novations and letter of submission to the Synod" he was deposed but not excommunicated.[6] In all

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1. Selections from Wodrow's Biographical Collections pp. LX-LXi.
2. Gordon, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 136.
3. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 137.
4. R. Baillie, Letters and Journals, Vol. I, p. 168.
5. Gordon, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 136-137.
6. R. Baillie, Letters and Journals, Vol. I, p. 164.

probability, no complaint of Arminianism was brought up against him.

Judging from the trial of John Guthrie, Bishop of Murray, he must have made a distasteful impression on the venerable Assembly. Not only, according to the charges, had he sold churches, but he was also "a prettie dancer" which he displayed very clearly when "he danced in his shirt" at his daughter's wedding.[1] To add to his charges, it was alleged that "he had suffered one Mr. Johne Peeter to teache Arminianisme".[2] All these charges were more than sufficient for the Assembly to unfrock him.

Patrick Lindsay, Archbishop of Glasgow, faced a variety of charges on the strength of which he was deposed.[3] He was given time to submit himself to the Assembly or to be excommunicated, but on 13th December he was excommunicated for his contumacy.[4]

The next bishop to await trial and deposition in absentia like all the other bishops, was James Fairly, Bishop of Argyle. His Arminian doctrine, it was said, made itself visible particularly in his teaching on universal grace by which God intended to save all. His Arminian views were thought strange by those who knew him long before and who considered him as rather orthodox. They interpreted his change of view

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1. R.K.S. Vol. II, p. 139.
2. Gordon, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 139.
3. Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 140-141; R.K.S., Vol. I, p. 172.
4. Gordon, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 141.

as an attempt to obtain promotion.[1] If the judgment of the Assembly that he was "a preacher of Arminianisme"[2] was correct, then Fairly had in fact changed considerably as far as theology was concerned, for, as previously mentioned, he was elected Professor of Divinity in the University of Edinburgh by virtue of his orthodoxy.[3]

The trials of the bishops were now drawing to a close. Only three were left. Neil Campbell, Bishop of the Isles, was only charged for "breach of the caveats" but this was considered enough to depose him from the ministry.[4] Alexander Lindsay, Bishop of Dunkeld, and John Abernethy, Bishop of Caithness, received some mercy from the hands of the Assembly because "both had submitted themselves to the Synod." They were deposed provisionally and to be restored on evidence of sincere repentance.[5]

The next day on 13th December, 1638, the sentences on the bishops were officially pronounced. On that occasion, Alexander Henderson, the Moderator of the Assembly, preached his solemn sermon on Psalm 110:1, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."[6] In his sermon he did not attempt to

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1. Gordon, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 141-142. One can agree with the modern historian's statement, "To vacancies as they occurred Laud could secure the nomination of men who shared his views" (J.H.S. Burleigh, A Church History of Scotland, London, 1960, p. 212), but it is not possible to ascertain how many clergymen were willing to change their doctrinal views in order to gain promotion.
2. R. Baillie, Letters and Journals, Vol. I, p. 165.
3. Vide supra p. 64.
4. R. Baillie, Letters and Journals, Vol. I, p. 165.
5. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 166.
6. This sermon was printed under the title: The Bishops Doom, (Edinburgh, 1762).

exercise scrupulosity, but he was sure to voice the opinion of nearly the whole Assembly on the bishops in asserting that "we may boldly say they have been the greatest enemy that God has had in this Kingdom."[1] Before reading to the Assembly the summary of the charges on which the bishops were found guilty, the Moderator anticipated that on hearing the indictments, "your heart shall quake, your hair shall stand and your flesh creep," was read.[2] In this recapitulation of the proofs against the bishops was included "preaching heresy and corrupt doctrine, Popery, Arminianism" as well as charges embracing church government and administration, liturgy, doctrine and morals.[3]

On eight of the bishops who by their conduct had declared themselves "to be strangers to the communion of the saints, to be without hope of life-eternal, and to be slaves of sin" the Moderator pronounced the sentence of excommunication. On four bishops the sentence of deposition without excommunication, previously decided on by the Assembly, was then also officially declared, while two bishops were provisionally deposed.[4]

The bulk of the work of the General Assembly of 1638 was herewith completed.[5] A week later the Assembly was concluded with "great

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1. Ibid., p. 25.
2. R.K.S. Vol. I, p. 178.
3. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 179.
4. The Bishops Doom, pp. 29, 41, 42.
5. Several processes of clergymen were heard by the Assembly after this date, but as the subject of Arminianism was not one of the points mentioned or discussed, except in the cases of Robert Hamilton and Patrick Panter to which already references were made (vide supra, p. 82 and pp. 94-95), there is no need for further dwelling on this.

comfort and humble joy." The reason for this consolation and gladness was obvious, and it was expressed by the Moderator: "We have now cast down the walls of Jericho."[1]

Anti-bishop or Anti-Arminian?

The question can justly be asked what walls were demolished by the General Assembly of Glasgow in 1638. Was their battering directed against the stronghold of episcopacy as such or at the "innovations and evils" in the church? To try to answer this question, one should first look at two manifestoes. The first is the National Covenant of Scotland, publicly promulgated on 28th February, 1638. As mentioned before, this document was significantly silent on the issue of episcopacy. A year later, on 4th February, 1639, another manifesto was published, this time for the attention of "all good Christians within the Kyngdome of Englande."[2] No uncertain note was sounded by this declaration in affirming that as far as Scotland was concerned, episcopacy was "contrare to their lawes and church constitutions and ever was so."[3] The manifesto also foresaw the grave possibility that "the setting upp of bishops will qwytte the cost of so much Christian bloode."[4] Between the dates of issue of these two documents lies the date of the Glasgow Assembly where bishops were

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1. Stevenson, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 676.
2. Gordon, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 191.
3. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 193.
4. Ibid.

deposed and episcopacy abolished. The Assembly did what the Covenant had envisaged, i.e. to resist the innovations and evils introduced in the church, but it also did what was not contemplated by the Covenant, i.e. to abolish and abjure episcopacy.[1]

It could be put forward as a possibility that the absence of any reference to episcopacy in the Covenant was a stroke of diplomacy in order not to lose support nor to reap the hostility of the higher authorities who were vested with power and influence. It is also conceivable and possible that there was at the time of the appearance of the National Covenant no national prejudice among the ministers against episcopacy. The majority of them had never experienced any other ecclesiastical government and was at least content. Apart from a group which followed Andrew Melville who believed that episcopacy was unscriptural, and David Dickson who alluded to it as "a bloodie sin before God",[2] it seems that the ministers of the Church of Scotland at the time of the signing of the Covenant did not have much objection against episcopacy simpliciter.

Prior to the Assembly, "evils and innovations", and bishops in the church were, on the whole, recognized as two separate entities. While the evils were inevitably to be removed, bishops were at least not intolerable. However, it happened to be that the errors and corruptions

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1. See Baillie's report of the Assembly's proceedings and his own position on episcopacy, Letters and Journals, Vol. I, pp. 156-160.

2. R.K.S., Vol. I, p. 173.

were introduced while the church was operating on an episcopal system. Moreover, the bishops were most enthusiastic in professing, practising and propagating these evils, and novelties. In such a way episcopacy and evil became intimately associated so that the conviction grew that it would be insufficient if not impossible to attempt to check error and evil without removing the source and supporters. In the subsequent process of doing away with ecclesiastical perversions, the Assembly dismissed the bishops and discarded episcopacy.

Seen in this framework, the assertion that the "assembly was bent on nothing short of abolishing episcopacy"[1] is very true indeed, but one should not neglect to observe that abolishing episcopacy was not the aim and end in itself. The purpose was to remove and remedy intolerable errors, evils and encumbrances, and in that uncompromising process episcopacy was swept away.

One of these intolerable errors was Arminianism. The general accepted view that the chief aim of the Assembly was to do away with episcopacy, had the effect of pushing the whole question of Arminianism into obscurity. The proposers of such a view hold that the various complaints, even the charge of Arminianism, against the bishops should not be taken seriously, because these charges were only accumulated to augment the eviction of them against whom the main charge, although

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1. Burleigh, op. cit., p. 220.

unwritten, was that they were bishops. This incorrect view of history was expressed, among others, by John Cunningham, writing that "it is certain that the great sin of the bishops was simply that they were bishops."[1] Apart from the above-mentioned considerations contrary to such a view, one should not lose sight of the fact that the number of ministers deposed by the same Assembly approximated the number of bishops removed. Following Cunningham's remark on the great sin of the bishops, it would not be only historically incorrect but also absurd to say that the great sin of the ministers was simply that they were ministers!

The charge of Arminianism against the bishops and ministers should be taken seriously in attempting to assess the decisions and acts of the Glasgow Assembly. The abundance of references to Arminianism in the complaints before the Presbyteries and the Assembly, the long explanatory speeches before the Assembly, and the references to Dort point to the fact that the Assembly became convinced that the obnoxious weed of Arminianism had become rooted in Scottish soil.

Robert Baillie who was well-informed on Arminianism and who was not likely to label a doctrine as Arminianism if it was not so in fact, was watching the growth of Arminianism long before the 1638 Assembly. In a letter dated 29th January, 1637, he referred to the dogmatical

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1. Cunningham, The Church History of Scotland (Edinburgh, 1859), Vol. II, p. 104. This is echoed by Meldrum, op. cit., p. 138: "Their main crime consisted in their being bishops, and that was enough to condemn them."

stand of his cousin, John Crichton, who on predestination was "fully with Arminius."[1] Writing two years later on 12th February, 1639, he reflected on the Glasgow Assembly and pictured the position in the following way:

> The way of our (Canterburian) partie is avovedly to full Arminianisme and really to so much Poperie as the Pope requires for the present, yea, much more; it hes been proven at our Synod that numbers of our brethren hes preached the most of the Canterburian tenets. 2

In his account of the Assembly written in June 1639, he repeated the same opinion in other terms and said:

> Since we did finde the articles of Arminius, with many poynts of the grossest poperie, in the books, in the preachings, and in the discourses of our bishops and ministers, we were resolved to have these doctrines censured as they did deserve, without any spareing for respect to any person who did maintain them. 3

Two inferences could be drawn from the proceedings of the Assembly and the above observations of Baillie. The first is that the teachings and activities of the episcopals were often considered as a conglomeration of Arminianism and Romanism. The second is, and this is of importance, that it became publicly apparent that a minority group in the Church of Scotland had left the main road of uncompromising Calvinism for the by-roads of accommodating Arminianism.

In this respect it is not irrelevant to note Cunningham's

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1. R. Baillie, Letters and Journals, Vol. I, p. 10.
2. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 113.
3. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 120.

statement of Arminianism as an unphilosophic system appealing to the feelings, and Calvinism as metaphysical and appealing to the pure intellect. If this distinction is debatable, then even more disputable is Cunningham's conclusion that due to "the Scotch cast of intellect", Arminianism could hardly find ingress to Scotland.[1] The intellectual qualities and abilities of the people of Scotland are not questioned if one suggests that there were other reasons why the Kirk rejected Arminianism. Perhaps the main reason, as also expressed in the speeches before the Assembly, was that the Calvinistic view was believed to be more scriptural. The point to be stressed here is that Arminianism did appear in Scotland, and although it was at its beginning like a little cloud, it grew rapidly and was one of the elements causing the storm at the General Assembly in Glasgow.

One could justly criticize the attitude as well as the procedure of the Assembly in shaping the destiny of the bishops and ministers. It can be argued that the debate on Arminianism was one-sided, and that nobody cared to explain the intention of Arminius in deviating from orthodox Calvinism. It is also true that the bishops were tried and judged in their absence and could not defend or exonerate themselves. Gordon's complaint that the Assembly had condemned bishops and ministers for Arminian teaching before Arminianism itself was condemned by the

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1. Cunningham, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 140-141.

Assembly, is also to be taken seriously.[1] The approval of the speeches on Arminianism and, therewith, the condemnation of Arminianism was implicitly signified by the loud applause offered to the speakers, but never did the Assembly cause an official document to be drawn up, setting out and condemning the Arminian tenets. To these objections could also be added that the charges of Arminianism against the clergymen were often vague and undefined. A further point of criticism raised by Gordon, that nothing could be found against any minister who had signed the Covenant, also seems to contain truth.[2]

While granting the relative strength of these arguments nothing is detracted from the fact that the Assembly in the process of cleaning up the ecclesiastical house, came to be faced with Arminianism, and as it was considered a defiling factor, it was expurgated together with its exponents. Considering all these factors, one is inclined to conclude that the disposition of the Assembly was not anti-bishop in principle, but resolutely anti-Arminian. This does not mean that there was no aversion to the bishops. On the contrary, there were strong feelings against them, not because of their ecclesiastical position as such, but rather by reason of what they held, what they did, and for what they were feared.

It can be put forward as a hypothesis that if the bishops were not

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1. Gordon, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 50.
2. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 142.

linked up with the liturgical changes in Scotland, not involved in the political struggle under the principle expressed in the dictum, "No bishop, no king", not feared as being conducive to the advance of Romanism, and not believed to be adherents to unscriptural tenets, they would not have been removed by the Assembly.

Admittedly the emphasis of the Presbyteries and Assembly on the erroneous doctrine of the bishops was not always and not altogether due to a desire for pure doctrine. In some cases it really appears as if the aim was to compile a list as extensive as possible including every possible misbehaviour and misbelief. Very often the charge of maintaining Arminian tenets was included in the list. In the case of John Spottiswoode this complaint was unjustly raised against him, and it might very well be that he was not the only one of the bishops who was charged with a doctrinal "crime" which he never had committed.

The bishops were considered to be vehicles and instruments of all "evils and innovations", and as the Assembly of 1638 desired to maintain the identity of the Church of Scotland, and to protect her from dangers from within and without - including the hazard of Arminianism - the episcopalians were sentenced to relinquish their bishop seats to wander in the ecclesiastical desert.

IV

THE ABERDEEN SCHOOL OF THOUGHT

The decisions of the Glasgow Assembly did not terminate strife, neither did it herald the approach of political and ecclesiastical tranquillity. There were still many opponents to the ideals of the Covenanters. Two of the strongholds of resistance against the Covenant principles were St. Andrews[1] and Aberdeen.

In 1495, the same year in which Pope Alexander VI issued the bull of excommunication against Savonarola for heresy, he also signed another bull sanctioning the erection of a university in Aberdeen, Scotland.[2] Where the academies in Scotland were essentially ecclesiastical, the founding of a university in far-off Aberdeen was a picturesque way of marking the influence and expansion of the Holy Roman Empire.

With the advance of the Reformation in Scotland, the University of Aberdeen, just like St. Andrews, would not readily yield to the innovations. In 1569 the professors who declined to subscribe to the principles of the Reformation were deposed without much ado.[3] Seventy years after this when the Covenanters knocked at the gates of the city of Aberdeen, the new reformers were also refused entrance.[4]

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1. C.J. Lyon, History of St. Andrews (Edinburgh, 1843), Vol. II, pp. 372-376 gives the reasons of the University of St. Andrews for refusing to sign the Covenant.
2. J.M. Bulloch, A History of the University of Aberdeen (London, 1895), p. 18.
3. Ibid., p. 111.
4. Grub, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 13-15.

The spear-point of the resistance to the Covenant was a group of distinguished divines known as the Aberdeen Doctors.[1] Three of them were at that time professors at the University of Aberdeen, namely, John Forbes, Robert Baron and William Leslie; the other three, Alexander Ross, Alexander Scroggie and James Sibbald were ministers in the city. In order to persuade Aberdeen to submit to the Covenant a strong delegation among whom were the Earl of Montrose and the ministers Alexander Henderson, David Dickson and Andrew Cant, arrived in Aberdeen on 20th July, 1638. Immediately on their arrival, they were presented with a paper containing a series of questions regarding the lawfulness of the Covenant, and the authority by which it was imposed.[2] This paper, later printed as General Demands concerning the said Covenant, was signed by the above-mentioned six doctors as well as by Dr. William Guild, also a minister in an Aberdeen parish.[3]

As the general opposition to the Covenant was largely due to the preaching of the Aberdeen Doctors, the visiting ministers launched a counter-attack. After Alexander Ross had preached, as Row said, "a terrible sermon againis all the poynts of the Covenant", Henderson and his two co-ministers in turn preached on 22nd, 28th and 29th July and

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1. For a fuller account of this group of Scottish theologians, see D. MacMillan, The Aberdeen Doctors (London, 1909).
2. A brief abstract of the fourteen questions are given by Grub, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 14-15.
3. Grub, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 13. For details of further papers printed in the dispute between the Aberdeen Doctors and the Covenanters, consult J. Spalding, The History of the Troubles and Memorable Transactions in Scotland (Aberdeen 1829, New Edition), p. 54.

produced arguments for subscribing the Covenant.[1] The response was by no means overwhelming. No more than fifty were willing to bind themselves to the terms of that document, but one of them was William Guild, "a weak time-serving man, who soon yielded to the arguments and threats of the Covenanters."[2]

A letter from the king to the Aberdeen Doctors thanking them for their discreet and peaceable opposition to the Covenanters did not offer or promise more than royal moral support.[3] In March 1639 while the Covenanters were mustering their forces to persuade Aberdeen to submit to their will, the Aberdeen Doctors took flight fearing that they would be compelled to subscribe.[4] On 10th April, the Council of Aberdeen resolved to subscribe the Covenant after James Row had preached on Acts 5:38, and the presence of an army of 6000 Covenanters in town had added more weight to the sermon.[5]

The Aberdeen Doctors escaped the signing of the Covenant but could not avoid ecclesiastical censure. In the processes against them dealt by the Aberdeen Assembly in 1640, the accusation of Arminianism was often heard. This together with the frequent assertion that the Aberdeen Doctors shared in the Arminian movement against Calvinian scholasticism,[6] necessitates a somewhat closer examination of the Aberdeen school of

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1. Row, op. cit., p. 494.
2. Grub, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 13.
3. For the king's letter, see Spalding, op. cit., p. 55.
4. Spalding, op. cit., p. 89.
5. Row, op. cit., pp. 513-514.
6. MacMillan, op. cit., p. 108.

thought and the exponents thereof.

Although one normally understands by "the Aberdeen Doctors" only the six theologians whose names are mentioned above, the study of the Aberdeen school of thought should include another three eminent and learned men, namely Patrick Forbes, William Forbes, and William Guild. These nine divines, jointly and severally, played an important role in shaping the theology of their day and in their city, a theology which outlasted their day and which echoed outside their city.

Patrick Forbes (1564-1635).[1]

In writing the history of the Aberdeen theologians, the name of bishop Patrick Forbes presents itself. It was he who attracted brilliant scholars and notable men to Aberdeen, the most famous of whom were the Aberdeen Doctors. As it is also maintained that the advantage which the Aberdeen Doctors had over the Covenanting party was due to the personality and influence of their late beloved bishop,[2] it would not be unprofitable to direct some attention to this theologian.

Patrick Forbes received his theological training from Andrew Melville, the distinguished scholar of the strict school of Calvin, who became principal of Glasgow College in 1574. When Melville accepted a chair in Theology and the principalship of St. Mary's College, Forbes

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1. W.G.S. Snow, The Times, Life and Thought of Patrick Forbes, Bishop of Aberdeen, 1618-1635 (London, 1952), gives full details.
2. G. Burnet, The Life of William Bedell (London, 1685), preface.

also moved over to St. Andrews. Even when Melville went into exile in 1583 by reason of the controversy between him and the king, Forbes accompanied him.[1] This close association with Melville, the staunch Calvinist, accounted largely for Forbes's strong adherence to orthodoxy.

In 1611 (or early in 1612) Forbes accepted a call and was ordained minister of Keith by one of the newly appointed bishops.[2] It is suggested that the reasons for his late ordination were the responsibility of entering upon a pastoral charge in unsettled and controversial times, and his deep respect for the presbyterian principles due to the influence of Melville.[3]

During the Aberdeen Assembly of 1616 Forbes came to the fore as one of the recognized leaders of the Church. He was on the committee which revised the draft Liturgy and the recently prepared Confession, the latter which stressed the Calvinist doctrine of predestination even more than its predecessor of 1560.[4] At this stage the doctrine of the Kirk was not as yet in dispute - episcopalians and presbyterians alike were good Calvinists.

When the see of Aberdeen became vacant at the end of 1617, the Scottish bishops advised the king to appoint Patrick Forbes. This was duly done and on 17th May 1618, Forbes was consecrated at St. Andrews

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1. J. Melville, Autobiography and Diary ed. R. Pitcairn (Edinburgh, 1842), p. 170.
2. Snow, op. cit., p. 47.
3. Ibid., p. 48.
4. Ibid., pp. 52-53.

as bishop of Aberdeen.[1] This appointment, apart from the personality, ability and learning of Forbes, was a conciliatory move by the king and his advisers to inspire confidence amongst all sections of churchmen in the king's ecclesiastical policy. For this purpose the nomination of Forbes who had sat at the feet of Melville but who was known as a moderate man and a supporter and defender of episcopalism, was the appropriate one. This position as bishop of Aberdeen he filled until his death three years before the Glasgow Assembly of 1638.

The main contributions of Forbes to the Aberdeen school of thought can be listed as follows,

(1) His ardent opposition to Roman Catholicism: Nowhere in Scotland was the strength of the impact of the Church of Rome felt more severly than in Aberdeenshire during this time.[2] At the same time, no one proved himself a stronger adversary of Rome than Patrick Forbes. In various writings he mercilessly exposed the practices and preaching of the Roman Church and did not hesitate to describe the Pope as a wolf in sheep's clothing and to equate him with the antichrist.[3]

(2) His unwavering adherence to Calvinism: It has already been pointed out that he cooperated in the final stages of the 1616 Confession, the contents of which he whole-heartedly endorsed. There is no evidence that he deviated from these views. The Arminian influences which touched

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1. Ibid., pp. 69-70.
2. D. McLean, The Counter-Reformation in Scotland (London, 1931), pp. 107-109.
3. For his works against the Roman Catholics, see Snow, op. cit., pp. 142-144.

and tainted some of the other bishops - and which were not absent from some of the doctrines of some of the Aberdeen Doctors - were not to be found in the teaching of Forbes.

(3) His preference to episcopalism: Forbes accepted episcopalism from a practical point of view. With this he did not disparage presbyterianism, because he held that the episcopal government was of the melius esse, rather than of the esse of the church. He regarded the chain of truth as essential in the church and not a mere lineal succession through a chain of bishops. His preference for the episcopal system was rooted in the belief that such a system could offer a closer unity.[1]

(4) His practical piety: He believed that the Word was the only rule covering the whole life and that the authority of the Bible was supreme. With courage and ability he exerted himself to apply the teaching of the Bible to everyday life and its problems.[2]

William Forbes (1585-1634).[3]

Although William Forbes was not one of the Aberdeen Doctors, he was not without influence while staying at Aberdeen. His thoughts constituted a part of the whole of the complex Aberdeen way of thinking.

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1. Patrick Forbes, A defence of the Lawful Calling of the Ministers of the Reformed Churches (Middelburg, 1614), gives a clear outline of his views on church government.
2. Snow, op. cit., pp. 157-160.
3. Biographical details by D. Irving, Lives of Scottish Writers (Edinburgh, 1839), Vol. II, pp. 1-10; Selections from Wodrow's Biographical Collections, ed. R. Lippe (Aberdeen, 1890), pp. 245-269. D.N.B. (1959-1960 edition) Vol. VII, pp. 411-412.

He was born and educated at Aberdeen and went abroad for further study. While in Holland he acquired the friendship of Hugo Grotius and stayed for some time in Leiden. "There," commented Wodrow, "he got his first tincture of Arminianisme."[1] On returning to Scotland, he became the pastor of Alford and in 1616 he was appointed one of the ministers of Aberdeen. In 1620 he became principal of Marischal College in Aberdeen, a position which he did not retain long, for at the end of 1621 he accepted a pastoral charge in an Edinburgh parish. In 1634 he was nominated and consecrated as the first bishop of Edinburgh. He did not long survive this promotion but died a few months later.[2]

The theological views of William Forbes as expressed in a sermon before King Charles on 25th June, 1633 received praise from the king and prominence by historians. Grub considered this sermon of great importance, "not only on account of the solemnity of the occasion, but also as marking the character which Scottish theology was now beginning to assume."[3] Referring to theological matters of controversy, Forbes condemned the eagerness with which positive assertions were made regarding predestination and grace, and the intolerance with which other opinion was regarded.[4]

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1. Selections from Wodrow's Biographical Collection, ed. R. Lippe (Aberdeen, 1890), p. 246.
2. Ibid., p. 255-261.
3. Grub, op. cit., Vol. II, p..346.
4. An abstract of the sermon is given by G. Garden, Reverendi viri Joh. Forbesii a Corse Opera Omnia (Amsterdam, 1703), pp. 290-294.

Forbes outlined his theology in greater detail in his scholarly work, Considerationes Modestae et Pacificae Controversiarum.[1] This treatise which formed part of his divinity lectures at Marischal College was one of the first Scottish theological works in which the writings of Anglican divines were constantly appealed to as authorities. Among those repeatedly quoted were Peter Baro, Lancelot Andrews, Richard Hooker, Francis Whyte, Richard Field and Richard Montague.[2] But he also turned to the Continent for light. Many and varied were the scholars quoted by him either in approval or in refutation. It is significant that the Dutch Remonstants and their views featured conspicuously in Forbes's opus. References to Jacobus Arminius,,Gerard Vossius, Coenraad Vorstius, and Hugo Grotius abound in the Considerationes.[3] The theological position of Forbes can be ascertained by, on the one hand, his remark that John Davenant, one of the British delegates to Dort, was one of the "more rigid Protestants,"[4] and, on the other hand, his siding with the views of Arminius and the Remonstants whom he frequently quoted with approval. That he was not deaf to the opinions and blind to the views of the more orthodox theologians, is shown by the fact that he also cited some of

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1. This work was first published in 1658. For further references infra, the 1850 London edition in the series Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology is used.
2. Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 33, 71, 201, 261, 263, 287, 317, 329, 373, to mention a few instances.
3. Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 77, 78, 81, 114, 137-139, 259, 315, 329, 337, 371, 399, 401.
4. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 343.

them with satisfaction, even William Amesius, whom he described as "a man more rigid almost than rigour itself."[1]

Referring to opinions on justification and predestination condemned by various Synods, he undoubtedly also alluded to the Synod of Dort, when he wrote:

> In most of the synods assembled by either party in this most deplorable age, scarcely anything else is attempted or done than to oppress and condemn the older and truer opinions, and that (the majority of those who were present at these synods, overcoming as generally happens, the better part), those opinions that are new and recently introduced into the church should be established with all violence, and made to dominate exclusively in the church and the schools . . . 2

With such an adverse disposition towards the Synods and their decisions on the doctrines of justification and predestination, one is not surprised that his own views revealed similarities with those of the Arminians. Discussing the question whether faith alone justifies, he took his stand with the Remonstants and appealed to their writing, expressing the notion that

> we are justified by a living and working faith; and, therefore, that we are justified by the works of faith, in so far as they are taken for that faith, and are considered as the fruit, nay, rather as the soul of faith. 3

Forbes further held that justification before God is not just a simple act of believing, but it is

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1. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 317.
2. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 197.
3. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 77.

> an actual repentance, or at least a firm and deliberate intention of mind to regulate, by the aid of divine grace our whole life with fear and trembling, after the pattern of the Christian religion. 1

From this point of view, Forbes with the Remonstrants denied that

> Christ's justice properly so called (that is, his obedience, as well active as passive, and also his innate holiness, etc.) is so imputed to us, that it itself subjectively inheres in us, and that thus we by it are formally made just. 2

This conviction so expressed, Forbes reiterated in the following way by quoting the Remonstants with approval,

> It is absurd to say, that the obedience of Christ is formally imputed to us on account of the obedience of Christ as an initiative cause. 3

Robert Baillie in A Large Supplement of the Canterburian Self-Conviction, devoted the second chapter to the erroneous notions of Forbes on election and salvation of man. Baillie alleged that the writings of William Forbes and James Wedderburn went in the dark from hand to hand like a precious treasure, but in his opinion it was nothing less than "thesaurus carbones, a treasure full of fiery coales, ready to enflame and burne to ashes, if not quickly quencht, the whole Protestant Church."[4] This is obviously an over-statement of the gravity

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1. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 81.
2. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 139.
3. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 141.
4. R. Baillie, A Large Supplement of the Canterburian Self-Conviction, appended to the third edition of his Ladensium Autokatakrisis, The Canterburians Self-Conviction (London, 1641), pp. 14-15.

of the situation. In the same way, Baillie's account of and his comment on Forbes's theology is somewhat unfair and too much coloured by his aversion to popery and Arminianism. Even when so much is granted, it is still true that Baillie's criticism was not unfounded. He was justified in sounding the alarm at the degrading of the fides sola justificat in so far as Forbes taught that "the removing of our sins is produced by way of efficient disposition, by our faith, repentance, fear and other acts inherent in us, which the assisting spirit of God helps our free will to do before we be regenerate."[1] Such a view is approximating that of the Arminians.

In one of the chapters on Justification, Forbes entered into an inquiry concerning the certainty of predestination and final perseverance in faith. Here Forbes attempted to steer a middle course between the various and opposing opinions while at the same time he appealed to his audience to practise moderation in matters about which there have always been dissentient opinions. Forbes's own opinion on predestination and perseverance does not present itself with clarity in this chapter. He put it forward as his belief that "a true believer cannot have a certainty of his Predestination or Election to glory, unless he have the certainty of his final perseverance", but then he continued, "there is not in this life absolute certainty about this latter", from which it also follows that "we cannot have a certainty . . . of the former either."[2]

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1. Ibid., p. 29.
2. Considerationes, Vol. I, p. 271.

Whether he conceived of predestination as rooted in God's foreknowledge and whether it was his opinion that those justified could altogether fall away from their faith and justice, is not at all lucid from his "modest consideration" of these much discussed theological problems. It seems, however, that he was at least inclined to sympathize with the Arminians on these points.

Robert Baillie could not find himself in agreement with the tolerant and broad-minded attitude of Forbes on these doctrinal points. For Baillie such a disposition was tantamount to avowing "that it matters little what we believe in these questions, whether we side with Arminius and the worst of Papists, or with Austine, with the Synod of Dort, and the rest of the reformed."[1] The seventeenth century historian, John Row, went even further than Baillie in stating his opinion that Forbes's principles were "a hotch-potch of popery and Arminianism."[2]

It is subject to no doubt that Forbes in his zeal for promoting ecclesiastical moderation and peace, went much further than the Aberdeen Doctors. In addition to showing himself an apologetist for such Roman Catholic teaching and practices as purgatory, prayers for the dead, invocation of angels and saints, he also sought reconciliation between the views of Protestants and Roman Catholics on the Lord's Supper.[3] In

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1. R. Baillie, A Large Supplement of the Canterburian Self-Conviction, p. 27.
2. Row, op. cit., pp. 371-372.
3. MacMillan, op. cit., pp. 174-175.

this respect Baillie and Row were fully justified in perceiving "popery" in Forbes's views.

Twentieth century historians, no longer personally involved in the theological struggles in which Baillie and Row found themselves, and consequently having perspective enough to express a more objective opinion, agree that "Scotland was not indeed immune from Arminian influences",[1] and that among those who adhered to such views, William Forbes "was one of the most definitely Arminian and Mediaeval of the conforming clergy."[2] From the short review given above of some of Forbes's notions, one cannot find any reason to disagree with such a judgment on his theological views, and it must be admitted that Forbes was "an avowed Arminian."[3]

John Forbes (1593-1648).[4]

John Forbes, who became the most famous of the Aberdeen Doctors, was the son of Patrick Forbes, bishop of Aberdeen. He entered King's College, Aberdeen, in 1607. Some years later, he visited his exiled uncle, John Forbes, in Middelburg and then enrolled at the University of Heidelberg. He remained there until 1615 when he moved over to Sedan to study under his countryman, Andrew Melville. He returned to Scotland with

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1. G.D. Henderson, Religious Life in Seventeenth-Century Scotland (London, 1937), p. 90.
2. J. MacLeod, op. cit., p. 64.
3. G.D. Henderson, "Arminianism in Scotland", London Quarterly Review, October, 1932, p. 494.
4. G. Garden, op. cit.; D.N.B., (1959-1960 edition), Vol. VII, pp. 402-404; G.I. Robertson, "John Forbes of Corse, his Life and Work", unpublished B.Litt. Thesis, University of Oxford, 1961, gives copious details.

his Dutch wife, Soete Roosboom, and in 1620 he was appointed professor of Divinity in King's College, a position for which he was pre-eminently qualified due to his scholarship and erudition.

In his first publication, Irenicum Amatoribus Veritatis et Pacis in Ecclesia Scoticana which came from the printing press in 1629, he defended with great learning and moderation the lawfulness of episcopacy as well as the innovations in worship allowed by the Synod of Perth in 1618. In February 1637 he took some part in John Durie's plan for uniting the Reformed and Lutheran Churches by setting out a scheme showing how the two great branches of Protestantism might be reconciled.[1]

With the rise of the Covenanters, Forbes took a deliberate stand against them. In April 1638 he published his tract, A Peaceable Warning to the Subjects in Scotland in which he considered the Covenant an unlawful bond. Great efforts were made to induce Forbes to sign the Covenant. His wide learning and high Christian character were acknowledged and drastic proceedings were stayed in the hope of his submission. His final answer, however, was that he could not profess what his conscience condemned.[2]

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1. MacMillan, op. cit., Chapter III.
2. Grub, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 74.

The theological views of John Forbes were also subjected to examination. In his Diary, Forbes gave a short narrative of the proceedings of the Aberdeen Assembly in dealing with him.

> Upon the day of August 1640, I was called and I compeared before the Generall Assemblie and the moderator thereof, Mr. Andro Ramsay, said to me in name and in presence of the whole Assemblie that the Generall Assemblie had found me ingenuous and orthodox and nather Papist nor Arminian. 1

This acquittal by the Assembly on theological ground was not enough to enable Forbes to retain his chair of Divinity and he was deposed for his refusal to sign the Covenant. In 1643 when the Solemn League and Covenant was sanctioned by both General Assembly and Parliament, John Forbes left Scotland and sailed for Campvere on the 5th of April, 1644. A year later his magnus opus, Instructiones Historico-Theologicae was printed in Amsterdam. In 1646 he returned to Aberdeen where he died two years later.

The Assembly's exoneration of Forbes on the charge of Arminianism drew comment from a modern writer on the Aberdeen Doctors who expressed his doubt whether they were "altogether justified in doing so."[2] While admitting that Forbes was not carried away by the new movement in theology, he nevertheless perceived Arminianism in the teaching of Forbes, although "his Arminianism must have been of a very mild type."[3]

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1. J. Spalding, Memorialls of the Trubles in Scotland and England, AD. 1624 - AD. 1645. (Spalding Club, Aberdeen, 1850), Vol. I, p. 447.
2. MacMillan, op. cit., p. 114.
3. Ibid.

This conclusion is mainly based on Forbes's conception of predestination. Forbes thought it blasphemous that God should be held responsible, whether in a direct or indirect way, for a damnation of a section of the human race.[1] He believed that salvation and good works were predestined but in respect of the wicked deeds of man leading to his damnation, these, Forbes maintained, were not predestined by God, but might be said to be foreknown.[2] Apart from this, Forbes regarded himself as an Augustinian and a Calvinist.

Apparently this wider element in Forbes's view on predestination gave no offence to the theologians of Netherland. In his Instructiones he voiced similar opinions; nevertheless his work was prefaced by a formal recommendation by the theological faculties of Leiden, Utrecht and Franeker.[3] This alone is nearly ample proof of the orthodoxy of Forbes. From the ranks of the Remonstrants Gerard Vossius also consented to the printing of the book, although he realized that some parts thereof were contrary to his own views represented in his Historia Pelagiana.[4]

The sentiments of John Forbes on episcopacy stood in the sign of moderation. Like his father he held the episcopal system to be scriptural and lawful, and not destructive to, nor inconsistent with the presbyterian

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1. Ibid., p. 115.
2. Ibid., p. 118.
3. R.H. Story, The Apostolic Ministry in the Scottish Church, (Edinburgh, 1897), p. 278.
4. J. Spalding, Memorialls of the Trubles in Scotland and England AD. 1624 - AD. 1645 (Spalding Club, Aberdeen, 1851), Vol. II, p. 504.

form of church government. He considered the absence of a bishop in those churches governed by communi presbyterorum consilio not as an essential but as an economical defect because the presence of a bishop did not belong to the true nature of the church.[1]

Finally, to characterise the ecclesiastical and dogmatical position of John Forbes in a negative way, one can quote with approval the statement that he was "neither an Arminian nor a high prelatist."[2]

James Sibbald (c. 1590 - c. 1650).[3]

James Sibbald was educated at Marischal College where he also prelected on Natural Philosophy from 1622 to 1626. Thereafter he was admitted to the first charge of St. Nicholas' Church, Aberdeen. In the same spirit as his colleagues, he strongly opposed the Covenant. For this reason he considered it unsafe to remain in Scotland and fled in March 1639 but he returned to his parish in October of the same year. The General Assembly which met at Aberdeen in 1640 summoned Sibbald, as well as other non-subscribers of the Covenant, to appear before a committee of the Assembly to give account of their deeds and misdeeds.[4]

The grave accusations against Sibbald were that he had opposed

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1. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 500.
2. J. MacLeod, op. cit., p. 64.
3. Biographical details: Gordon, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 228-230; D.N.B., (1959-1960 edition), Vol. XVIII, pp. 177-178.
4. Grub, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 73.

the Covenant and had refused to sign it, and that "he had preached poyntes of Arminianisme publickly in the pulpitt of New Aberdeen."[1] The witness for the Assembly was Samuel Rutherford who when an exile at Aberdeen had heard Sibbald preaching. Sibbald defended himself and denied Rutherford's accusations.[2]

The testimony of Rutherford was not the only evidence against Sibbald. Manuscripts of Sibbald happened to come into the hands of his adversaries and the Assembly took cognizance of these. Sibbald objected to these papers being used as evidence against him since some of them were short summaries of works read by him with a view to either refuting or utilizing them in sermons or publications.[3] In a review of the lawsuit against him and his answers to the articles of the accusation, light is shed on his own views. Many of his opinions expressed, e.g. concerning the forty days' fast, expiation of sin by almsgiving, the dedication and sanctity of churches, the justice of God and the afflictions of the good and just, all these are not so relevant here in this discussion.[4] But his views on the antecedent will and the consequent will of God stand in need of some elaboration.[5]

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1. Gordon, op. cit., Vol. III, pp.228-229.
2. Ibid., Vol. III, p. 229.
3. Gordon, op. cit., p. 54.
4. Ibid., pp. 54-56.
5. Ibid., pp. 56-58.

Sibbald's thoughts on the will of God, which is closely connected with predestination and the extent of salvation, are not at all clearly outlined. In the same way as William Forbes he often used arguments without directly stating whether his own views were in accordance with such proposals. In this manner he stated that an antecedent will could be either absolute or conditional. Recognizing a certain degree of ambiguity in Sibbald's theology, it would, nevertheless, not seem incorrect to summarise his beliefs on the will of God as follows: There is an antecedent will in God desiring the salvation and holiness of all people to whom the sufficient means thereto are offered, since innumerable men, so far as we can ascertain, are deprived of the necessary means of salvation. The punishment of sin in a state of eternal separation from God, that is, the perdition of a part of the human race, cannot be brought under the antecedent will of God. Sibbald disapproved strongly of those who neglected to realize the relationship between predestination and foreknowledge. If the point should be discussed, he said, he would rather incline to the view that the ordaining of certain men to eternal death was an act of justice in accordance with the consequent will of God and presupposing the foreseeing of sin. On the other hand he fully recognized and admitted that there was nothing in man, no hidden merits, by virtue of which God had ordained some to eternal life.

With these theological thoughts, Sibbald moved in line with John Cameron and approached Arminianism. He expressed his disagreement with the Arminians who, as he formulated it, asserted that God loved the elect more than the others by his consequent will although he loved all equally by his antecedent will.[1] He was convinced that the Synod of Dort was of the same opinion as he, even more so the delegates from Great Britain.[2] Sibbald was not fully justified in his claims, for although the British theologians at Dort chose a milder view, his notions showed more resemblance to those of John Cameron, Moïse Amyrald and Richard Baxter and their hypothetical universalism.

Sibbald ended his retrospection of his case with a plea for moderation and he quoted the Church of Lyons on the articles expressing the opinion that God willed all to be saved:

> . . . let us restrain ourselves with a wholesome moderation, so that we may neither be bold to despise things nor attempt to affirm them as if necessary . . . And if even those good men who framed this definition wished to preserve the moderation of their piety, they would have done better to pass this matter over in silence, and have allowed to each his opinion according to his own faith and authority which he think most to be recognized, and the quarrel between them of such a long and pernicious contention, being finished, the peace and unity of the Church of Christ would be restored. 3

The General Assembly of Aberdeen did manifestly not share Sibbald's

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1. Ibid., p. 57.
2. Ibid., p. 57.
3. Ibid., p. 58.

idea of allowing everyone his own opinion. On the evidence of Rutherford and the contents of Sibbald's papers he was found "verie corrupt" in many points of doctrine, and was deposed.[1] The next Assembly held at St. Andrews in 1641 again opened the file of Sibbald and took a second look at his papers, some of them still "smellit of Armenianisme."[2]

It would not be equitable to place Sibbald in a theological camp where he did not want to be, but it would be both fair to him and just to history to say that he cannot be considered an orthodox Calvinist on account of his views on predestination and universalism which were very close to those of John Cameron and the Arminians.

Robert Baron (c. 1593-1639).[3]

Robert Baron studied and distinguished himself at St. Andrews University where he became professor in Philosophy. With the advancement of Patrick Forbes to the diocese of Aberdeen, Baron succeeded him in the parish of Keith in Banffshire. In 1626 he was appointed one of the clergy of Aberdeen and the next year he became the first professor of Theology in Marischal College.

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1. R. Baillie, Letters and Journals, Vol. I, p. 248.
2. J. Spalding, Memorialls of the Trubles in Scotland and England AD. 1624 - AD. 1645 (Spalding Club, Aberdeen, 1851), Vol. II, p. 58.
3. Biographical details: J. MacPherson, "A Scottish Schoolman of the 17th Century", Presbyterian and Reformed Review, 1900, pp. 309ff.; D.N.B., Vol. I, (1959-1960 edition), p. 1190; Gordon, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 235-249.

When Samuel Rutherford was banished to Aberdeen, he was confronted by "the great doctors" who, as he asserted, openly preached against him in the pulpit and tempted him with disputations.[1] In these debates it was usually Baron who took the initiative and troubled Rutherford with discussions on the "Arminian controversies."[2] These disputes left no doubt in Rutherford's mind that in doctrine the Aberdeen Doctors were all corrupt.[3]

The General Assembly of 1640 did not fail to agree with Rutherford's verdict. Although Baron had died in August and thereby had escaped much of the rancour and religious animosity, the Assembly would neither allow his theological beliefs to rest with him nor permit them to escape censure. Baron's contemporary, John Spalding, recorded that Baron's wife was ordered to appear before the Assembly bringing with her her husband's papers. The papers when seen by the Assembly, "were not found sound."[4] There was also produced a letter from the archbishop of Canterbury to Baron, as well as two other letters addressed to Alexander Ross and Baron, which the Assembly construed as "all tending to the maintenance of Arminianism". In the letters, it was alleged, a reward was promised if they would cause Edward Raban, the printer to the

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1. Letters of Samuel Rutherford, ed. A.A. Bonar (Edinburgh, 1891), p. 189.
2. Ibid., p. 239.
3. Ibid., p. 275.
4. J. Spalding, History of the Troubles and Memorable Transactions in Scotland (Aberdeen, 1829, New edition), p. 192.

town council and Aberdeen University "to imprint in the Book of Common Prayer some passages of Arminianism."[1] In his report on the proceedings of the Assembly, Robert Baillie, whose "heart was only sore for good Dr. Barron",[2] wrote to William Spang in September 1640 that Baron "otherwayes ane ornament of our nation, we found has been much in multis the Canterburian way."[3]

Such a statement, although very vaguely formulated, would imply that the Assembly considered him to be at least in sympathy with Arminian doctrine, especially on the strength of Rutherford's evidence and the sentiments disclosed in the letters. Whether one can rely on this evidence or not, it appears that the Assembly's judgment was not unjust, for there are other sources revealing Baron's deviation from orthodoxy. In a work attributed to Baron, namely, Disputatio de Universalitate mortis Christi contra Rheterfortem, the author defended the view that Christ had died for all men and had willed that all should be saved.[4] This proposition is repeated and defended in his unpublished "Septenarius Sacer de Principiis et Causis Fidei Catholicae". There can be no doubt that Baron, in harmony with his colleague Sibbald, held theological views similar to those of John Cameron. Hypothetical

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1. Ibid., p. 192.
2. R. Baillie, Letters and Journals, Vol. I, p. 221.
3. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 248.
4. See also Gordon, op. cit., pp. 22-23.

universal atonement, the possibility of all men becoming reconciled to God in Christ provided they believe, a certain extent of free will, conditional predestination proceeding from God's foreknowledge, all these were taught by John Cameron and Baron alike.

Contemplating these factors of evidence, one cannot term Baron an orthodox Calvinist, perhaps not even an advocate of "moderate Calvinism"[1] as it was suggested. It is true that he often expressed his agreement with the Contra-Remonstrants in his Philosophia Theologiae Ancillans[2] but that was in 1621. It was already pointed out that other theologians in this period had altered their theological notions, and this is not inconceivable in the case of Baron. It should also be noted that John Cameron himself asserted that he approved of the Canons of Dort; nevertheless, he went his own theological way.

In conclusion, it is true but not definite enough to state that Baron's "writings are Calvinistic, though not such as satisfied the somewhat extreme Samuel Rutherford."[3] Perhaps one could, without the hazard of ascribing too much to Baron, characterize his theology as liberal Calvinism resembling in many respects that of Jacobus Arminius and John Cameron.

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1. G.D. Henderson, Religious Life in Seventeenth-Century Scotland (London, 1937), p. 50.
2. Ibid., p. 87.
3. G.D. Henderson, "Arminianism in Scotland", London Quarterly Review, October, 1932, p. 494.

Alexander Scroggie (1565-1659)[1]

Alexander Scroggie attended King's College and became a regent of Marischal College. He ministered in the parish of Skene from 1603 and in 1621 he was advanced by Patrick Forbes from Drumoak to Aberdeen. He took the degree of Doctor of Divinity in King's College in 1627. In March 1639 he refused to sign the Covenant and fled from Aberdeen.

At the Aberdeen Assembly in 1640 Scroggie was accused of not subscribing the Covenant, of concealing adulteries and fornifications within his parish, and of erroneous doctrine.[2] The latter charge, however, need not be taken seriously. Baillie reported that Scroggie, as far as his theology was concerned, was "not verie corrupt".[3] The Assembly held another opinion and found him "guilty of Arminianism."[4] By reason of this and on account of the other charges of which the refusal to sign the Covenant was the most serious, "he was deposed and simpliciter deprived and preached no more at Old Aberdeen".[5]

In 1641 he petitioned the Assembly and offered to subscribe the Covenant and to make a full recantation before the Presbytery.[6] This

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1. Biographical details: Gordon, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 226-227.
2. J. Spalding, History of the Troubles and Memorable Transactions in Scotland (Aberdeen, 1829, New Edition), pp. 192-193.
3. R. Baillie, Letters and Journals, Vol. I, p. 248.
4. R.K.S., Vol. I, p. 292.
5. J. Spalding, History of the Troubles and Memorable Transactions in Scotland (Aberdeen, 1829, New Edition), p. 192.
6. Gordon, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 228-229.

recantation did not include any dogmatical tenets, and from the available information nothing could be affirmed pro or contra his Calvinism.

Alexander Ross (1594-1639).[1]

Alexander Ross was born and educated in Aberdeen. In 1621 he entered into the pastoral charge of Insch from where he was translated to Footdee, near Aberdeen in 1631. Five years later he was back in Aberdeen as minister of St. Nicholas' Church. When the rest of his colleagues departed from Aberdeen in March 1639 due to the troubles and turmoils of the times, Ross was bed-ridden. He died on the 11th of August in the same year before he could be summoned to the Assembly of 1640.

In the same spirit of Patrick Forbes, Ross showed himself no friend of the Church of Rome. He stood solidly behind his bishop's attempts to combat Romanism by pen and proclamation and in his opinion Patrick Forbes had almost "plucked up Popish superstition by the roots."[2]

About the doctrinal views of Ross, not much can be said. Attention has already been directed to the letters addressed to Baron and Ross, which the Assembly thought were tending to the maintenance of Arminianism.

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1. Biographical details: MacMillan, op. cit., pp. 255-256. Gordon, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 209.
2. Funerals of the Right Reverend Father-in-God. Patrick Forbes of Corse, with a Biographical Memoir by G.F. Shand, (Spottiswoode Society, 1845), p. 188.

Apart from this there does not seem to have been any charge of erroneous doctrine against Ross, and there is apparently no reason for suspecting him of deviation from Calvinism.

William Leslie (Died c. 1654).[1]

William Leslie studied at King's College and in 1617 he was appointed one of the regents. He became the sub-principal of the College in 1623 and principal in 1630. His opposition to the Covenant caused his deposition in 1639. In addition to the "crime" of not yielding to sign the Covenant, he was accused of laziness, negligence in the execution of his duties, as well as of excessive drinking.[2]

The charge of unsound doctrine, and more specifically the teaching of Arminianism, was not raised against him. Leslie's contemporaries are in unison in their praise of his great learning and instructive conversation, but practically nothing of his writings and thoughts is left to posterity.

William Guild (1586-1657).[3]

William Guild was born and educated in Aberdeen and acquired a pastoral charge in the city of his nativity. Although he was one of the

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1. Biographical details: Gordon, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 231-232. MacMillan, op. cit., pp..256-261.
2. Gordon, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 231.
3. Biographical details: J. Shirrefs, An Inquiry into the Life, Writings and Character of the Reverend Doctor William Guild, (Aberdeen, 1799).

Aberdeen Doctors who propounded the Demands to the commissioners of the Covenant on their arrival in Aberdeen in July 1638, he was one of the first to sign the Covenant. This he did not do unreservedly but on two conditions, namely, that he did not condemn the Articles of Perth as being unlawful or articles of popery, and that he did not condemn episcopal government.[1] In 1638 he took his seat at the Glasgow Assembly,[2] and two years later he became principal of King's College on which occasion he was required to sign the Covenant unconditionally to which he readily agreed.[3]

Like Patrick Forbes, Guild was a strenuous adversary of Romanism and he wrote various works against the Church of Rome.[4] He was not only a convinced Protestant but there is also no reason to question the quality of his Calvinism. There was never any charge of erroneous doctrine brought in against him and there is no evidence that he inclined to Arminianism. Even John Spalding, his contemporary townsman, of whom Guild was no favourite, could not find any ground for an accusation of unsound doctrine.[5]

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1. Ibid., p. 58.
2. Ibid., p. 59.
3. J. Spalding, History of the Troubles and Memorable Transactions in Scotland (Aberdeen, 1829, New Edition), p. 146.
4. For his writing, see Shirrefs, op. cit., pp. 15, 16, 24, 28, 32, 33, 34, 82, 83.
5. Ibid., p. 98.

A Comprehensive Retrospect.

Reviewing the teaching of the nine theologians of Aberdeen touched on in the aforegoing pages, it almost seems a misnomer to speak of an Aberdeen school of thought if by this one refers to their dogmatical views. They did have much in common but the common ground was not essentially of a doctrinal nature. They were all men of great learning and accumulated knowledge; they excelled many others in godliness and piety, sometimes even bordering on pietism; they were men who stressed the importance and value of studying the Scriptures; they paid high tribute to primitive Christianity; they emphasized and practised toleration and moderation; and finally, they preferred episcopalism to presbyterianism.

In doctrinal matters, the Aberdeen theologians were not all of one mind. In some sense, Patrick Forbes and William Forbes constituted the two outer sides within the bounds of which the dogmatical pendulum of the Aberdeen Doctors oscillated. Between the antagonism of Patrick Forbes and the accommodation of William Forbes in their attitude towards the Church of Rome, the Aberdeen Doctors sought the middle way in their desire for promoting peace and unity among the Protestant churches. In this ideal they were prepared to set aside some articles of belief on which men differed and to concentrate on the "fundamentals." In the second place, with on the one hand the strict Calvinism of Patrick Forbes, and on the other hand the pronounced Arminianism and inclination

to Roman Catholic doctrine of William Forbes, the Aberdeen Doctors again tried to steer the middle course in which they themselves ranged from a milder Calvinism to a milder Arminianism.

To attempt to fit the Aberdeen Doctors in one or other theological category could prove to be unfair or even misleading. At the risk of this, but from the available information one can perhaps broadly and generally state that John Forbes and William Guild were convinced Calvinists, that against Alexander Scroggie, Alexander Ross and William Leslie no Arminianism could be proved, but that James Sibbald and Robert Baron were not free from Arminianism. The Aberdeen Doctors did not stress the dogma. Their attitude towards doctrinal tenets was more or less, pauca credenda multa agenda. For them the practical virtues carried much more weight than transcendental dogmatical systems. That is why Robert Baillie could say, "we fand them irresolut about the Canons of Dort as things they have never seen, or at least considered."[1] Their approach of accentuating the Bible teaching, piety, duty, ecclesiastical peace, and toleration had the effect of minimizing the value of dogmatical formulations, whereby they were moving in the direction of an undogmatical Christianity, free from doctrinal fetters.

With this comprehensive approach they approximated Arminius who emphasized the very same points and who, from his vision of man and his

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1. R. Baillie, Letters and Journals, Vol. I, p. 248.

understanding of Scripture, came to assume views not compatible with orthodox Calvinism. The Aberdeen divines could be called the followers of Arminius in so far as they breathed the same spirit as he had done, but on dogmatical grounds they cannot be equated in an unqualified manner with Arminius.

In view of this, such a general statement as "their theological system had more in common with that of Pelagius and Arminius than with that of Augustine and Calvin"[1] cannot be accepted without qualification. The same applies to the opposite assertion, that "the Doctors were all Calvinists on such matters as predestination, justification by faith, irresistibility of grace, original sin, and the true believer remaining in the state of grace."[2] The fact is that both these contradictory conclusions contain a part of the truth, namely that while the Aberdeen Doctors were Calvinistic on the whole, a general spirit of free inquiry, of independent thought, of dogmatical freedom and tolerance, of stressing the due and duty of man, prevailed in Aberdeen after the fashion of Arminius and Cameron, and that this general spirit modified some particular Calvinistic doctrines in conformity with those of Arminius and Cameron.

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1. R.H. Story, The Apostolic Ministry in the Scottish Church (Edinburgh, 1897), p. 278.
2. Robertson, op. cit., p. 13.

V

THE CASE OF JOHN SIMSON

The years which succeeded the Glasgow Assembly of 1638 and the era of the Aberdeen Doctors were distinguished by the supremacy of the Covenanters in the Scottish ecclesiastical field.[1] Prominent men such as Robert Baillie, Samuel Rutherford, George Gillespie and James Durham continued to raise a voice of warning against Arminianism.

Robert Baillie's Ledensium ΑΥΤΟΚΑΤΑΚΡΙΣΙΣ was still in demand. In 1641 a Large Supplement of the Canterburian Self-Conviction was affixed to it. His Antidote against Arminianisme was reprinted in 1652, entitled, "A Scotch Antidote against the English Infection of Arminianisme". In his letters he continued to express his anxiety and abhorrence of Arminianism.[2]

Samuel Rutherford was a prolific writer.[3] Apart from his Exercitationes Apologeticae pro Divina Gratia[4] in which he copiously discussed the Arminian doctrine, his lectures covering more or less the same ground

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1. J.D. Douglas, Light in the North, the Story of the Scottish Covenanters (Exeter, 1964).
2. R. Baillie, Letters and Journals, Vol. III, pp. 340, 465.
3. Letters of Samuel Rutherford, ed. A.A. Bonar (Edinburgh, 1891), pp. 30-31 for a full list of Rutherford's works.
4. Vide supra, p.68.

were published in Utrecht in 1668 as Examen Arminianismi. While these two books were primarily concerned with the Arminian theology and controversy, even in many of his other written works, he could not refrain from constantly referring to the errors and dangers of Arminianism.[1] In all these books he revealed himself as an intellectual, theological and religious giant. Due to his fame and erudition he was twice invited to the Netherlands to occupy a divinity chair in the Universities of Harderwyk and Utrecht, both of which he did not accept.[2]

George Gillespie in his Treatise on Miscellany Questions,[3] did not hesitate to label the Arminians as "heretics" who "bring forth to the light of the sun what is hid within the minds of other unregenerated persons as in so many dark dungeons."[4]

David Dickson, Divinity professor in Glasgow and after that, Edinburgh, wrote a treatise entitled "Praelectiones in Confessionem Dei".

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1. E.G. Christ Dying and Drawing Sinners to Himself (London, 1647), pp. 311-312, 328, 368, 369, 375, 376, 392, 403, 416-418, 426; The Preeminence of the Election of Kings, or a Plea for the Peoples Rights (London, 1648), pp. 43, 222; A Free Disputation against Pretended Liberty of Conscience (London, 1649), p. 122; Disputatio Scholastica de Divina Providentia (Edinburgh, 1649). Here reference to the Arminians abound as is to be expected from the sub-title, a part of which reads, "adversus Jesuitas, Arminianos, Socianos"; The Covenant of Life Opened (London, 1655), pp. 57-65, 168-172.
2. J. Murray, The Life of Samuel Rutherford (Edinburgh, 1828), pp. 257-260.
3. Published in 1649. Republished in Presbytery Armour (Edinburgh, 1844), Vol. II.
4. Presbytery Armour, Vol. II, p. 64.

This was posthumously published in 1684 as Truth's Victory over Error[1] in which the reader is repeatedly confronted with the theology of the Arminians. In every case the refutation of these tenets consisted in numerous Bible quotations.

James Durham in his Christ Crucified[2], a selection of 72 sermons on Isaiah 53, also crossed swords with the Arminians. The title page describes the book as a work "wherein also Adversaries of the truth, as Socinians, Arminians and Antinomians are smartly, solidly and succinctly reasoned and refuted."

Not only Durham, but other ministers as well referred to Arminianism and attacked it in their sermons. Wodrow mentioned Alexander Dunlop who entered the ministry in 1643 or 1644 and who "preached over the Arminian controversy in the pulpit to his people".[3] Another minister, George Hutcheson, was, according to Wodrow, "tainted in his youth with Arminianism". Having realized his erroneous doctrinal position, he strongly preached against the "deceitfull Arminians."[4]

In such an atmosphere, one is not surprised at the undue suspicion which abounded. John Sprang, Professor of Divinity and Principal of

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1. In 1725 another edition was printed by William Duncan, Glasgow.
2. The full title reads, Christ Crucified, or the Marrow of the Gospel evidently holden forth in LXXII Sermons on the whole 53 Chapter of Isaiah (Edinburgh, 1683).
3. R. Wodrow, Analecta (Glasgow, 1843), Vol. III, pp. 16-17.
4. Ibid., pp. 12-13.

Glasgow University from 1625 to 1650 was suspected of adhering to "Laudian, popish and Arminian schemes in points of doctrine." His positive assertion that he cordially assented to the decisions of the Synod of Dort and the Confessions of the Church of Scotland, gained him in 1650 the certificate of orthodoxy.[1]

When presbyterianism was restored in 1690, after an intermediate period of episcopalism during the years 1661 to 1689, an alertness of Arminianism appeared. A letter addressed to the General Assembly of 1690 vented anxiety over the episcopal clergy, "many of them tained with the leaven of Popery, Arminianism and Socinianism."[2] A purging committee visiting the universities in 1690 were instructed to pay attention to errors in doctrine, in particular as to popish, Arminian and Socinian notions. This committee was not at all satisfied with the dogmatical position of John Strachan, Professor of Divinity in the University of Edinburgh. The second article on their charge-sheet against him read "that he is commonly reputed to be an Arminian and he preached and maintained Arminian and Pelagian principles in the Trone-church."[3] Strachan refused to answer directly whether he was an Arminian or not. A similar charge was raised against his colleague, Alexander Munro and

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1. H.M.B. Reid, The Divinity Principals in the University of Glasgow, 1545-1654 (Glasgow, 1917), pp. 284-285.
2. Patrick Walker, Biographia Presbyteriana: The Life and Death of . . . Mr. James Renwick (Edinburgh, 1837), Vol. II, p. xxv.
3. Presbyterian Inquisition as it was lately Practised against the Professors of the College of Edinburgh, Aug. and Sept. 1690 (London, 1691), p. 73.
4. Ibid., p. 78.

both were deprived of their academic chair.[1]

The charge of Arminianism was a common one. Episcopal clergy were generally characterized during this time as being "addicted to Arminianism and Socinianism."[2] At the same time, a pamphlet by an episcopal writer remarked that the learning of the presbyterians was only found in their anti-Arminian metaphysics.[3]

The 18th century "case history" of the Scottish church commenced with the trial and deposition of James Graham, episcopal minister of Dunfermline and former professor of Humanities at St. Andrews University. One of the charges against him was the preaching of dangerous errors. Of this charge, Graham said, "I was painted out in a most hideous manner as a rank Arminian, tho I had in express terms disclaimed Arminianism."[4] Resulting from the case of Graham, the General Assembly promulgated in 1704 an act forbidding the teaching of Arminian errors.[5] In 1711 the Assembly included Arminianism among the doctrines, tenets and opinions to be disowned by candidates for ordination.[6]

Only three years after this Act, John Simson, Professor of Divinity at Glasgow endowed with the task of training candidates for the ministry,

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1. A. Bower, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 315.
2. Some remarks upon a late pamphlet Entituled an Answer to the Scots Presbyterian Eloquence (London, 1694)p. 56.
3. The Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence, or the Foolishness of their Teachings Discovered (London, 1694), second ed., p. 15.
4. The Famous Tryal of the Late Reverend and Learned Mr. James Grame (London, 1719), p. 4.
5. Principal Acts of the General Assembly, 1704, p. 13.
6. Principal Acts of the General Assembly, 1711, p. 19.

was to stand trial for the alleged teaching of Arminian doctrine. When it is asserted that he was "the first notable heretic within the Scottish Church, the first to strike a blow that roused her from the slumber in which she had long lain", and when the theological views of the professor are narrowly defined as "Arminian heresies",[1] then the necessity for a closer examination of the "heretic", the "heresies" and the "blow" becomes obvious.

His Curriculum Vitae.

John Simson[2] was born on 13th July, 1667. His father was Patrick Simson, minister of Renfrew and the author of a volume of spiritual songs of commendable quality.[3] A selection of these poems was sanctioned by the General Assembly of 1708 for use in the church, but this intention did not materialize. It is considered possible that the son's reputation for heresy prevented the publication of his father's hymns as an official manual for praise.[4]

After he had studied at the Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow,

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1. H.F. Henderson, The Religious Controversies of Scotland, (Edinburgh, 1905), p. 4.
2. H.M.B. Reid, The Divinity Professors in the University of Glasgow, (Glasgow, 1905), p. 4.
3. A Dictionary of Hymnology, ed. J. Julian (London, 1957), Vol. II, pp. 1023, 1024, 1058.
4. H.M.B. Reid, The Divinity Professors in the University of Glasgow, (Glasgow, 1923), p. 204. This supposition of Reid is considered to be far-fetched and the reason is sought in the quality of the verses. See, W.J. Couper, "The Levitical Family of Simson", R.S.C.H.S., (Edinburgh, 1932), Vol. IV, p. 229.

he assumed a position as librarian in Glasgow. In 1696 he left his country for Leiden to study theology under Johannes Marckius. Although he received his theological training from such a renowned and orthodox scholar, it is said that he "seems to have entered early into the sentiments of the Remonstrants who are better known in this country (i.e. Scotland) as Arminians."[1]

On his twenty-first birthday, Simson was licensed by the presbytery of Paisley and became assistant to his father. In 1705 he was ordained minister of Troqueer where he officiated until 1708 when he was appointed to the chair of Divinity in the University of Glasgow.

Very soon critics found reason for concern and complaint. It became clear that Simson's training and teaching was of a different stamp from that of his predecessor James Wodrow and that he was pursuing a course diverging somewhat from the older traditions. Already in 1710 a discussion took place between the professor and Dr. James Webster, a minister in Edinburgh, depicted by a contemporary who was not an admirer of him as "over-orthodox and as great bigot as any in the country."[2] Another but similar testimony reads, "a man of great warmth but narrow spirit."[3] Three years later there was another dispute between

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1. Bower, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 235.
2. E. Calamy, An Historical Account of my own life, ed. J.T. Rutt (London, 1829), Vol. II, p. 161.
3. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 179.

Simson and Webster "upon the head of doctrine and teaching of unwarranted things" by Simson.[1] When the official Church Visitors called on his parish, Webster pointed out to them that "Simson had vented both Socinian and Arminian errors."[2] The case was referred to the Presbytery of Glasgow and the ecclesiastical wheels started to move ~~when~~ on the 27th of September 1714[3] when Webster presented to the Presbytery the document charging Simson with teaching sundry errors. However, as high velocity is not one of the common characteristics of church machinery, the investigation was protracted for three years to terminate in an ambiguous judgment by the General Assembly in 1717.[4]

Shortly after this, the Marrow controversy assumed the place of prime importance and kept the church in agitation for several years.[5] In 1726 the spot-light moved back to Simson when "melancholy accounts" concerning Simson's heterodox views on the deity of Christ started to circulate.[6] The doors were opened for another heresy trial conducted by the General Assembly during the years 1726 to 1729.

The crux of the matter seems to be that Simson in speaking of

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1. R. Wodrow, Analecta (Glasgow, 1842), Vol. II, p. 239.
2. State of the Processes Depending against Mr. John Simson, Collected by John Dundas (Edinburgh, 1728), p. 1.
3. Ibid., p. 2.
4. The Principal Acts of the General Assembly, 1717, p. 17.
5. For the Marrow controversy, see H.F. Henderson, op. cit., pp. 20-43. D. Beaton, "The Marrow Of Modern Divinity and the Marrow Controversy", R.S.C.H.S. (Edinburgh, 1926), Vol. I, pp. 112-134.
6. R. Wodrow, Correspondence, ed. T. McCrie (Edinburgh, 1843), Vol. III, p. 234.

Jesus Christ had declined to use the terms necessary-existence or independency in explaining the three Persons in one Godhead. It was alleged that he had said that these terms were impertinent, and not to be used in referring to the Trinity; that they were philosophical niceties, and ambiguous terms of art. Connected with this was the other accusation that he had said "that the three persons of the Trinity are not to be said to be either numerically or specifically one in substance or essence."[1] Apart from these charges of heterodoxy concerning the Trinity, it was also held against him that he had vented opinions propositions and hypotheses similar to those which were prohibited by the General Assembly Act No. 9 of 1717.[2] Thus the charge of Arminianism appeared again in the second trial.

Although it was the conviction of the University of Glasgow that "they cannot allow that any censure of an ecclesiastical nature upon the said Mr. Simson can affect his office in the University",[3] the General Assembly suspended him from both teaching and preaching.[4] Simson lived for another eleven years after his deposition, scrupulously observing the silence imposed upon him. He died on 2nd February, 1740.

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1. The Case of Mr. John Simson, Professor of Divinity in the University of Glasgow (Edinburgh, 1727. Infra abbreviated: The Case, 1727), p. 42. This report gives details of the second trial.
2. Proceedings of the Committee appointed by the Assembly 1727, Concerning Mr. John Simson (Edinburgh, 1729), pp. 1-5.
3. Munimenta Almae Universitatis Glasguensis (Glasgow, 1854), Vol. II, pp. 447.
4. Principal Acts of the General Assembly, 1729, p. 13.

The Disputed Doctrines.

In the first libel dated 27th September, 1714, which was tabled before the presbytery of Glasgow, ten "errors" maintained by Simson, were listed. Two days later a second charge-sheet produced a further thirteen erroneous tenets supposed to have been held by Simson.[1] It is not necessary nor relevant to dwell on all these points, but some time will be devoted only to those having a direct or indirect bearing on Webster's charge of Arminianism.

(1) Divine Election.

The unorthodox thinking of Simson on this theological problem was, as Webster saw it, that the Professor rejected both the supralapsarian and the sublapsarian order of the decrees of God on man's election and reprobation; that persons who are foreseen to believe are the objects of election; that the decree of giving grace is upon God's foresight of their using the means thereto; that Christ and his merit is the cause of God's election; and that the decree of sending Christ preceded his decree of election.[2] In such teaching on election, Webster sensed not only error, and not only an attack on orthodoxy, but the very assertions of the Arminians. He quoted the Canons of Dort, the

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1. Full details of the charges and Simson's answers are to be found in The Case of Mr. John Simson, Professor of Divinity in the University of Glasgow (Glasgow, 1715). (Infra abbreviated: The Case, 1715).

2. The Case, 1715, pp. 19, 20, 86.

Confessions of Faith and Rutherford's Examen Arminianismi to substantiate his unshakable belief that the Professor's views were alien to Reformed theology, contrary to the Synod of Dort and hostile to Scripture truths.[1]

Simson's reply to these severe charges was that the Confessions followed neither the supralapsarian nor the sublapsarian view and that he proposed a third, being a compound of these two, because both schemes were labouring under insurmountable difficulties.[2] He denied that he held the doctrine of election on foreseen faith and regretted that his accusers would have him to be "all one with the Arminian notion."[3] In his own opinion on election, so he assured the presbytery, there was "not the least apex of the Arminian scheme."[4]

He summarized his views on election and grace as follows:

> According to my opinion, God does not decree to give regenerating grace upon the foresight of people using means appointed by him according to the liberty of their free-will . . . but, on the contrary, He decrees to give regenerating grace to those, whom, in the decree of election, He has determined to use these means appointed by him for obtaining thereof, and to whom, in the use of these means He has determined to give it, so that none but the elect do use these means, and in the use of them, receive that grace. 5

Like Webster, Simson also appealed to Rutherford and to the Synod

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1. Ibid., pp. 19, 21.
2. Ibid., p. 87.
3. Ibid., p. 93.
4. Ibid., p. 93.
5. Ibid., pp. 96-97.

of Dort to prove that he did not cross the borders of traditional Calvinism, that his views were not the same as those of the Arminians which were "contrary to Scripture, our Confessions and the Synod of Dort."[1]

(2) Original Sin and Infants.

An alleged expression by Simson in a discussion of infants dying in infancy that "none go to hell for original sin", was enough for Webster to label such a statement as "gross Arminianism, condemned by orthodox divines . . . such as our learned and holy Rutherford."[2]

Simson granted it to be an Arminian proposition to say that God cannot justly condemn a person merely for original sin, but such an error, Simson said, he disowned and refuted.[3] His own hypothesis was that "probably God will not cast into hell merely for original sin who is guilty of no actual sin, "and such a supposition he denied to be Arminian.[4] On the contrary, he produced evidence to show that this view had really been maintained by "some of the most eminent of our orthodox divines, and I cannot find it among the errors rejected by the Synod of Dort."[5]

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1. Ibid., pp. 81, 93.
2. Ibid., p. 22.
3. Ibid., p. 98.
4. Ibid., p. 117.
5. Ibid., p. 117.

(3) The extent of redemption.

Webster perceived in Simson's teaching the Arminian thought of universal redemption because the professor made "Christ the universal remedy for Jews, Mohammedans and pagans" and that Simson maintained that the Covenant of grace embraced them all.[1]

This charge Simson rejected with conviction and replied that "the Arminians taught that Christ is the universal remedy by which God designed or intended to save all mankind, although in the event they be not all saved." This, Simson said, was not his view. On the contrary, "this is so far from ebing maintained by me that I yearly refute it."[2] In the same manner he denied that he had maintained that "the Covenant of grace was made with Jews Turks and pagans."[3]

(4) The means and free-will.

Concerning the use of means to salvation, Webster considered that Simson's notion on the connection between the unrenewed man's actions and saving grace was Arminian because he (Simson) attributed man's salvation to man's own desire to be saved and his own ability to apply the necessary means thereto.[4]

According to Simson, this was not his view. He asserted that he was of the opinion that all the means, ordinary and extraordinary, by

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1. Ibid., p. 22.
2. Ibid., p. 98.
3. Ibid., p. 103.
4. Ibid., p. 23.

which men were to be converted, were specially determined in the Covenant of redemption and decree of election.[1] He maintained that the using of the means of obtaining grace cannot be ascribed to man himself or to man's own free-will, but "to God by whom he was guided and excited to every step in the right use of these means."[2] This, Simson concluded, is not Arminian, and is not contrary to Scripture doctrine or the sum of it in the Confessions and Catechisms, and it is not to be found among the Arminian errors rejected by the Synod of Dort.

(5) God's glory and man's happiness.

The Professor's opinion on the relationship between God's glory and man's happiness has no direct bearing on Arminianism, and Webster did not charge him with Arminianism in this respect. This opponent of Simson, however, took exceptions to the Professor's view because, as he understood it, Simson placed such an undue emphasis on the happiness of man that he even considered it, and not God's glory, as the summum bonum.[3] In this Webster undoubtedly saw a serious deviation from Calvinism which used to proclaim the honour and glory due to God for this was exactly one of the objections against Arminianism, a system in which its opponents perceived a shifting in accent from God to man.[4]

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1. Ibid., p. 218.
2. Ibid., p. 219.
3. Ibid., p. 222.
4. Ibid., pp. 26-29.

In a lengthy answer,[1] Simson tried to make it clear that the glory of God and the bliss of man were neither opposites nor hostile to each other. Briefly stated, his views were as follow:

(a) The highest aim of God with the world and with man is that they should show the glory of his perfections, and even man's highest good or chief end is subordinate to the glory of God.[2]

(b) In seeking to glorify God on earth, man finds happiness.[3]

(c) But then man's active glorifying of God here and now, leads to the full enjoyment of God eternally hereafter.[4]

(d) These two,,active glorifying God here and enjoying God hereafter, are interrelated and interwoven, Simson explained it this way:

> Supposing we should glorify God here as he requires, He could not be glorified thereby unless we also enjoy him for ever; and on the other hand, God cannot be glorified by our enjoying him for ever unless we should first glorify him here by the exercise of faith and holiness.[5]

The Judgment of History.

Having listed a few of the charges of Arminianism against Simson and his replies to the accusations of erroneous doctrine, one should attempt to assess the Professor's theological position. Was he an

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1. Ibid., pp. 135-155.
2. Ibid., p. 137.
3. Ibid., p. 137.
4. Ibid., p. 139.
5. Ibid., p. 140.

adherent to Arminian doctrine who successfully managed to camouflage these tenets when he stood trial? Or was he free from Arminian tendencies but committed to some theological views signifying a moving away from the general, accepted theology of his day? Did Webster in his zeal overstate the case for Arminianism before the church councils, or was Simson an exponent of Arminianism but did the Assembly fail to recognize or to admit the fact? Could Simson be termed a Calvinist? Was he a heretic? These questions could be multiplied but these are enough to point out the direction in the search for a possible answer.

During the course of history, many answers have been propounded. In his fears of the hazard of unorthodoxy in the teaching of Simson, Webster was not alone. Robert Wodrow, though not as outspoken as Webster who claimed that he would prove Simson "guilty of Socinianism, Jesuitism, and Arminianism, in an hour's time",[1] seems to have shared the belief in Simson's heterodoxy. In a letter dated 16th November 1711, Wodrow revealed a cordial friendship with Simson.[2] Two years later, he found it necessary to write: "I think the sense you put upon ratio, evident propositions naturally revealed, seems at first view, strained."[3] Although the committee entrusted with the investigation

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1. R. Wodrow, Correspondence, Vol. II, p. 203.
2. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 251.
3. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 1.

of Simson's views reported that "there was nothing proven to the charge of Socinianism, Arminianism and Jesuitism",[1] general satisfaction did not prevail. Wodrow reported that in an attempt to soften expressions previously used on the eternal state of infants, Simson explained the Covenant in a sense which he "did neither ever hear nor understand."[2] Nevertheless, according to Wodrow, Simson's explanations of his teaching failed to convince a considerable group within the Assembly. They believed that he attributed too much to man's will to be saved whereby he gave them just ground to suspect his orthodoxy.[3]

That Wodrow was one of those who questioned Simson's doctrinal views, cannot be doubted. His belief that Arminianism was no fictitious danger is clearly demonstrated in a letter written while the discussion of the trial of Simson was dominating the conversations in the studies and the streets. In this letter he mentioned that he had received Baillie's Antidote against Arminianisme, and then he added, "It hath of a long time been my opinion that we are most in hazard in the church of the Arminian and Pelagian errors."[4] He further expressed his willingness to assist and encourage the distribution of Baillie's book. It is unthinkable that Wodrow did not have Simson's "errors" in mind when he was writing this letter.

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1. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 692.
2. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 261.
3. Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 164-165.
4. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 276.

The finding of the Assembly of 1717 that the Professor had "adopted some hypotheses different from what are commonly used among orthodox divines that are not evidently founded on Scripture"[1] was a veiled admission of Simson's unorthodoxy. During the second trial this verdict was construed by some that "he had been condemned by the Assembly in 1717 for Arminianism."[2] Needless to say, Simson vehemently protested against such an interpretation.

Another contemporary of Simson and a member of the committee who investigated and considered the process of James Webster against John Simson, was John Flint of Edinburgh. In his book entitled Examen Doctrinae D. Johannis Simson,[3] he stated and refuted Simson's views. The alleged errors of Simson may be catalogued as follows:[4]

(1) By natural revelation God discloses to men his placabilitas or reconciliabilitas enabling them to understand the way of salvation.

(2) God's decrees were dependent on foresight.

(3) It is probable that all infants dying in infancy might be saved.

(4) Divine providence and predestination acts mediately by surrounding men and prevalent circumstances.

(5) The ultimate aim of men in serving God is their own happiness.

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1. Principal Acts of the General Assembly, 1717, p. 17.
2. The Case, 1727, p. xxxvi.
3. Printed in Edinburgh, 1717.
4. According to H.M.B. Reid, The Divinity Professors in the University of Glasgow (Glasgow, 1923), p. 218.

(6) There was no proper covenant made by God with Adam.

(7) There is an essential connection between the use of means and saving grace.

(8) Sin is not necessarily propagated through Adam's transgression.

(9) After the last judgment, there will be no more sinning in hell.

(10) The imputation of Christ's righteousness is merely formal.

(11) Reason together with Scripture should be used in theology.

(12) One and the same soul may exist in different bodies.

(13) The eating of blood is forbidden in the New Testament.

(14) The moon may be inhabited.

Flint saw three distinct features in Simson's views, an enlargement of the Gospel, an exaggeration of the natural powers of man, and an over-emphasis of the ratio. Like Webster, he did not hesitate to classify Simson with the Arminians.

In 1717 another book examining Simson's views and written by another minister of Edinburgh, John McLaren, appeared. In his work, The New Scheme of Doctrine,[1] he covered more or less the same ground as Flint but here extended over 457 pages. The similarities which he found between Simson and the Arminians abounded, expressed in such statements as "very like Arminian doctrine";[2] "very much the same with that which

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1. The full title reads, The New Scheme of Doctrine contained in the Answers to Mr. John Simson, Professor of Divinity in the Colledge of Glasgow, to Mr. Webster's Libel, Considered and Examined (Edinburgh, 1717).

2. Ibid., p. 10.

Limburg lays down";[1] "plainly symbolizes with the Arminians";[2] "he seems to speak in the dialect of Limburgh, the Arminian";[3] "Arminianistic through and through";[4] and "plainly Arminian doctrine",[5] just to mention a few instances. McLaren devoted an exceptionally long discussion to Simson's view on infants dying in infancy. "If all infants dying in infancy be saved, it would seem there is no election" McLaren concluded, and then it would also follow according to McLaren, that Simson's views included universal redemption.[6]

James Hog[7] and John Willison,[8] ministers of the gospel joined the ranks of the critics and opposers of Simson. Patrick Walker, another contemporary of Simson, wrote with much more zeal than knowledge about the Professor's theological opinions. He described Simson as one of "the new lights risen up to darken all the burning shining light . . . and to augment the anger of the Lord against sinful Scotland." Simson's theology he characterized as "a hotch-potch or bagful of Arrian, Arminian, Socinian, Pelagian, old condemned damnable errors, infecting the youth giving ground to fear it will spread further and leaven more."[9]

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1. Ibid., p. 54.
2. Ibid., p. 96.
3. Ibid., p. 119.
4. Ibid., p. 226.
5. Ibid., p. 299.
6. Ibid., p. 67.
7. Wodrow, Correspondence, Vol. II, p. 3.
8. The Whole and Practical Works of the Reverend and Learned Mr. John Willison, late minister of the Gospel in Dundee (Aberdeen, 1817), p. 715.
9. P. Walker, Six Saints of the Covenant, ed. D.H. Fleming (London, 1901), p. 149.

After the Marrow controversy and the Secession, a new outburst of accusations directed against the Church of Scotland and against John Simson caused further ecclesiastical tension.

A dissenting writer enumerated fifteen reasons for not joining the Church of Scotland, the tenth of which reads: "In presume Presbyterian dissenters cannot join with the Church, because she is unfaithful in her doctrine, and the unsound are so numerous that the erroneous escape just censure."[1] According to the same author, the unfaithful attitude of the Church became visible, not only in the lack of testimony against "the hirelings, the Episcopal clergy, swarming like frogs thro' the nation, venting their Arminian doctrine and damnable tenets"[2] and in tolerating a certain Mr. Robert Naismith "to preach and print dangerous Arminian errors",[3] but also in the case of John Simson. Here the writer charged the Church with error in doctrine and discipline because she had failed to maintain "the great fundamental points of our true and holy religion against Professor Simson's gross, blasphemous Arian, Socinian and Arminian tenets uttered."[4]

In subsequent years these objections against the Church of Scotland was repeated by the Seceders. The four dissenting ministers Ebenezer Erskine, William Wilson, Alexander Moncrief and James Fisher, refused

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1. Plain Reasons for Presbyterians Dissenting from the Revolution Church in Scotland (n.p., 1731), p. 91.
2. Ibid., p. 94.
3. Ibid., p. 98.
4. Ibid., pp. 103-104.

the offer granted by the General Assembly of 1734 to restore them. In their Reasons, published in the same year, they made it clear that their grounds for dissenting were not at all removed by the Assembly and that they were still maintaining their complaint against the "damnable and pernicious errors" taught by men like John Simson without the least fear of censure.[1] In a following testimony, they specified the propositions held by Simson as "very agreeable to the Arminian scheme."[2]

The succeeding years did not bring any marked change in the Seceders' abhorrence of Simson's "scheme of pernicious and dangerous principles."[3] In his "Pelagian and Arminian errors" they saw a threat to the doctrine of grace and constrained by the conviction that since Simson's time the warmest opposition had been offered to this doctrine, the Associate Presbytery in session at Edinburgh in October 1742 felt themselves called to pass an Act concerning the doctrine of grace.[4]

Writing the history of the University of Edinburgh a century after John Webster had accused John Simson of Arminian errors, the narrator

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1. Reasons, republished with other Secession writings in one volume, entitled The Re-examination of the Testimony, (Glasgow, 1779), p. 239.
2. Act, Declaration and Testimony (1737), republished in The Re-Examination of the Testimony, p. 113.
3. Act and Proceeding of the Associate Presbytery met at Edinburgh, May, 1739, (Edinburgh, 1739), p. 16.
4. Act of the Associate Presbytery Concerning the Doctrine of Grace (Edinburgh, 1744),,p. viii.

asserted that "it is beyond a doubt that he (Simson) was not Calvinist but had vented Arminian opinions from the Chair."[1]

To this cloud of witnesses of the Arminian tendencies and tenets of Simpson, can be added some of our own century who also traced some or other resemblance between Simson's views and Arminianism. One scholar interpreted the overthrow of episcopacy as a liberation of Scotland from Arminian tendencies, "but," he continued, "it failed to purge completely the Eastern section of the church, and Simson's election to succeed Wodrow was a formidable blow to Western piety and doctrine."[2]

A historian of the Free Church of Scotland picturing the various theological undercurrents in Scotland at the beginning of the eighteenth century, also mentioned the "heresy" of John Simson, which in his opinion, was "the first instalment of Arminianism paid out to the Presbyterian youthful divines of Scotland."[3]

Other writers were more reluctant to attach the label of Arminianism to Simson's theology. One found it ample to term Simson's teaching "a fresh thought",[4] another saw the mild rebuke by the Assembly of 1717 as "a tacit admission that neanomianism in some form or another was henceforth to be allowed a place within the church."[5] But then, if

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1. A. Bower, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 235.
2. H.M.B. Reid, The Divinity Professors in the University of Glasgow (Glasgow, 1923), p. 201.
3. D. MacLean, Aspects of Scottish Church History (Edinburgh, 1927), p. 69.
4. Drummond, op. cit., p. 142.
5. J. MacInnes, The Evangelical Movement in the Highlands of Scotland, 1688-1800 (Aberdeen, 1951), p. 171.

the proposition could be accepted that the then, prevailing neonomianism was of "a generally Arminian character",[1] it would follow that Simson's views were generally Arminian.

The Case Reconsidered.

It requires no special insight to realize that a list of critics and their verdicts on Simson's theological views offer no proof, not to mention conclusive proof, for the belief that Simson was maintaining or supporting Arminian propositions. Such judgments are more illustrative of the attitude towards Arminianism than descriptive of Simson's beliefs. In the same way, Simson's initial acquittal by the committee who investigated the case,[2] the General Assembly's taciturnity in judgment,[3] and the Professor's own testimony of adherence to the Confessions and Catechisms,[4] are also not to be taken as convincing evidence of his not having subscribed to some Arminian views.

What is truth? Where is truth to be found? These are perplexing questions also to the historian. Judging from the comprehensive evidence in the case of John Simson, perhaps this is part of the truth: Simson did not wilfully intend to attack the doctrine of the Church, to under-

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1. J. MacLeod, op. cit., p. 139.
2. Wodrow, Correspondence, Vol. II, p. 692.
3. Principal Acts of the General Assembly, 1717, p. 17.
4. The Case, 1715, p. 60.

mine Calvinism or to promote Arminianism. He attempted to rephrase the doctrine of the church and, seen from an orthodox Calvinistic point of view, he went too far in his statements.

Relevant and important is Simson's answer to the accusations raised by John Webster.[1] He affirmed

(1) that he had found himself sometimes obliged to avail himself of other arguments than those used by Marckius and other theologians in explaining the truth.

(2) that he had made use of some other propositions purely speculative or only probable and having no necessary connection with faith or practice, to answer the cavills of adversaries.

(3) that he had advanced some opinion wholly new. This he defended as follows:

> That some things new and useful maybe found out and lawfully proposed by me, or any other professors, minister or Christian I hope, will be thought reasonable by all who consider that several new things, whereby the knowledge of the truth was promoted, have been advanced since our first Reformation from Popery Confessions, which their compilers designed as a means to increase but not to restrain people's growth in grace and in knowledge of God and of the truth of the gospel. And this will still be allowed by those who are persuaded that our knowledge in Divinity is not yet arrived at perfection and that the Spirit is not yet restrained more than formerly . . . 2

With these statements Simson admitted that he had used other arguments, speculative arguments and new arguments not being used by

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1. The Case, 1715, pp. 60-65.
2. Ibid., p. 63.

orthodox divines. But this does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that as far as doctrine was concerned, he was deviating from the Confessional roads, making inroads on Calvinist theology or paving the way for heresy. It would not be too tolerant to Simson to say that he was no heretic, at least not in respect of his first trial. He denied all the charges of unorthodoxy, he attested his adherence to the doctrine contained in the Confessions and Catechisms, and he never intended to overturn the walls of belief of the church. What is also important, is that the combined wisdom of the General Assembly did not find him guilty of holding or disseminating beliefs contrary to the official teaching. Granted that church councils are not infallible in their investigations and judgment, and that there could be factors obscuring the objectivity of the judgment, nevertheless, it is perhaps not incorrect to assert that one can only be branded as a heretic through the official verdict of the church.

Simson was in one way or another engaged in a theological restatement of the articles of faith. In such a reconstituting there are at least two potential risks, the possibility of such a restatement being misunderstood, and the possibility of falling into erroneous expressions. Considering the case of Simson, one gets the impression that both these possibilities became realities. That he was misunderstood and misrepresented by Webster who reconstructed his (Simson's) statements in an Arminian scheme, seems more than only

conceivable. Webster and those of his opinion were convinced that the doctrinal truths were clearly and adequately defined in the Confessions and Catechisms and they construed dissimilar terminology as deviating theology.

It is also true that Simson's reconstruction revealed some a-Calvinistic notions. This is evident in his views on predestination which was neither supralapsarian nor infralapsarian but this need not count too heavily against him, although it seems that Calvin had favoured the supralapsarian view.[1] Simson can be called a "philosophic necessitarian" in this respect.[2] He denied the time-honoured doctrine of the divine concursus, acknowledged God's absolute dominion over all the free actions of man, and maintained that there could never be real existence without the element of evil. This is not Calvinistic teaching, but from Simson's statements one cannot deduce, as Webster did that Simson explained election and reprobation in terms of and resulting from the foreknowledge of God.

On the question of original sin and its effect on mankind and in particular on infants dying in infancy, Simson definitely moved towards the Arminian position which distinguished sharply between actual and original sin, and which denied that the sin of Adam was imputed to his posterity.

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1. Wendel, op. cit., p. 272.
2. J. Walker, The Theology and Theologians of Scotland (Edinburgh, 1872), p. 87.

Simson's teaching on the extent of the atonement is not very lucid, but one is justified in saying that he was of the opinion that the scope of the death of Christ was not limited to the elect. At the same time he strongly rejected the Arminian universalism whereby God intended to save all although actually it would not happen.

On the close relationship between grace, the means of grace, and the use of the means, Simson placed a heavy emphasis. In fact, he stressed the importance of the use of the means to obtain salvation to such an extent as to make it appear that the use of the means was a condition which man was able to fulfil by an act of his own free will. Simson denied that this was his belief, but justly or unjustly his opponents found in his expressions resemblances to Arminianism.

The main objection against Arminianism as a theological system is that it attributes too much to man and too little to God, that it makes man's salvation rest, partially at least, on man's own will and actions, and that it consequently deprives God of his glory and honour. The same objection is to be found back in Webster's libel against Simson on the Professor's views on God's glory and man's happiness. Undoubtedly, Webster saw in Simson's notions an enchroachment on the glory of God, and he had on his side the Calvinistic tradition which has always considered the exalting and the praise of God as the highest aim for this life and for the life to come.

It should be pointed out that Simson had no intention of giving

priority to man's happiness. He perceived quite clearly that there was no contradiction, or at least, that there should be no contradiction between God's glory and man's happiness. In this belief he was supported by the Westminster Shorter Catechism of 1647. On the question, "What is the chief end of man?" the answer reads: "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever."[1] Here the compilators of the Catechism asserted that the chief end (singular) consists of two components which should not be separated from each other, namely, glory directed to God, and joy experienced by man.

From all these considerations, one thing becomes clear, and that is that John Simson was no convinced advocate of Arminianism. He was a Calvinist but of another quality than the divines of Dort. He was a liberal Calvinist after the manner of John Cameron, who on certain dogmatical points moved towards or sided with the Arminian way of thinking. Whether he came to these views as a result of individual thinking or due to the influence of the writings of the Arminians is not to be proved, although, as a professor in theology he was undoubtedly acquainted with their works.

These considerations and conclusions have reference only to Simson's first trial. In the second case, the charge of Arminianism was not explicitly raised and was overshadowed by the charges of heterodoxy concerning the doctrine of the Trinity. In respect of the second case,

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1. P. Schaff, The Creeds of Christendom (New York, 1877), Vol. III, p. 676.

one can agree with the historian who noted that "the general trend of his doctrine was found to be that of Samuel Clarke and English deism",[1] although in the official finding of the General Assembly it was not defined in that way.

The Dogmatico-ecclesiastical Significance.

It is significant that a century after the Synod of Dort, the authority of Dort was still recognized and honoured. Both Simson and his adversaries quoted or referred to the Synod of 1618/19 to substantiate their views or to strengthen their chain of defence or attack. Attention has already been drawn to some of these references to offer proof of the high value which Scotland placed on the theology and decisions of the Synod of Dort.

In the Webster vs. Simson case, references to Dutch theologians and their views, occupied a salient position. Johannes Marckius,[2] under whom Simson had studied in Leiden, featured most prominently in the discussions of various theological tenets. His book, commonly known as the Medulla[3] was at that time one of the textbooks used by Simson's students. In 1715 Simson in a speech before the Glasgow Presbytery said that he had used "Marck's little Compend"[4] in his

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1. G.D. Henderson, Religious life in Seventeenth-Century Scotland (London, 1937), p. 98.
2. Biographical details in N.N.B.W. (Leiden, 1933), Vol. IX, pp. 647-648.
3. The full title reads, Theologiae Christianae Medulla Didactico-elenctica ex Majori Opere Secundum ejus Capita et Paragraphos Expressa (Amsterdam, 1690).
4. The Case, 1715, p. 61.

lectures to his students, and eleven years later he could still testify, "Since I had the honour to teach Divinity, I have yearly explained Professor Marck's Little Compend, called his Medulla".[1] But it was exactly Simson's explanation of and his deviation from the same Medulla that constituted a main part of the charges against him. Webster in his complaint against Simson said:

> When he commented upon Marckii Medulla, he was not satisfied with confuting of him, but treated him rudely for keeping the orthodox road, in defending Protestant principles, having the expression several times in his mouth, 'Hallucinator Author', tho' it is well known that Marckius is a very orthodox divine. 2

Simson admitted that he had felt obliged to use some other arguments than those used by Marckius for explaining the truths, and other answers for meeting the objections. He also admitted having described Marckius in the way to which Webster took exception, but what he meant was that Marckius was "mistaken".[3] Here Simson referred to Gomarus who although he had honoured John Calvin, nevertheless ascribed a Duplex Halucinatio to him on account of his exegesis of Matt. 20:16.[4] On another occasion he again made reference to Gomarus when he recalled his exposition on Matt. 22:14, which he (Gomarus) asserted could not be interpreted as referring to "the whole of elect and reprobate".[5]

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1. The Case, 1727, p. 2.
2. The Case, 1715, p. 15.
3. Ibid., p. 285.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., p. 109.

The notions of the Dutch theologian, Herman Witsius, found a prominent place in the trial and defence of Simson. In his attempt to exonerate himself, Simson declared that he was in agreement with Witsius who asserted that a mere knowledge of God and his will would not be sufficient to effect the salvation of the heathen.[1] Webster, in turn, claimed Witsius as his witness in confirming the erroneous view of Simson that it was possible that the moon and other planets were inhabited by rational creatures.[2] He pointed out that both Witsius and Melchior Leydekker had warned against the danger of speculation involving the further hazard of contradicting the Scriptures.[3]

In the defence of his views on the Covenant of works, Simson referred to Franciscus Junius and Johannes Hoornbeek who, he maintained, agreed with him that one cannot speak in a legal sense of a covenant between God and Adam because mutual promises and mutual acceptances were lacking.[4]

To conclude these cursory remarks on the importance attached by Scotland to the Dutch theology, only one more incident need be mentioned. Concerning the procession of the Holy Ghost, whether only emanating from the Father, or from both the Father and the Son, Simson advised Webster to read De Tribus Symbolus of Gerrard Vossius in order to acquaint

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1. Ibid.
2. Proceedings of the Committee Appointed by the Assembly 1727 concerning Mr. John Simson (Edinburgh, 1729), p. 22.
3. The Case, 1715, p. 57.
4. Ibid., pp. 161, 215.

himself with the dogmatic and historical details.[1]

Another significant feature of the case of Simson is that it marked an important point in Scottish church history and Scottish theology. The trial revealed a lack of unanimity on various doctrinal issues and brought to light the existence of a double-current Calvinism within the Church of Scotland in her presbyterian form. Due to the deficiency of descriptive and accurate terms, these two currents could broadly and unspecifically be indicated as orthodox and liberal Calvinism.

Although the orthodox current has always been the main stream and the liberal current at first nothing more than a tiny tributary, the latter showed itself very clearly in the time of John Cameron, in the period of the bishops before the 1638 Assembly, and in the teachings of some of the Aberdeen Doctors. Even throughout the period of the Covenanters, this liberal Calvinism was never far removed. In the case and time of John Simson, this liberal and liberalizing trend reached one of its high-water marks.

Simson was not alone in his beliefs. He was no isolated figure, no solitary voice crying out in the wilderness. It was observed that "Mr. Simson ahd many friends in the Church, who, if they had not imbibed his errors, considered them trivial and unimportant."[2] At the same time grave concern was expressed when it was noticed how his notions

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1. Ibid., p. 281.
2. Wodrow, Correspondence, Vol. II, p. 268 (Footnote I).

were spreading "both among students, gentlemen, and some who were thought to have been more solid."[1] All this is indicative of the fact that the liberal Calvinism in Simson's time was a factor not to be underrated nor to be argued away. A theology removed from the strict literal understanding of the Bible and unwavered adherence to the Confessions and Catechisms, presented itself. Sharply in contrast to Simson's views and those of his supporters and disciples, stood the orthodoxy of Webster, Flint, McLaren and others who constantly quoted Rutherford and the text of the Confessions to substantiate their standpoint.

The case of Simson, the so-called "Auchterarder Creed",[2] and the Marrow controversy contributed further to make the theological differences assume the dimensions of theological and ecclesiastical divisions. In all three instances the theological problem of the relationship between grace and the use of the means of grace played an important role. Both of these "necessities" to salvation were over-emphasized so that those who stressed "faith alone" were antinomians in the eyes of those who accentuated the importance of the use of the means and the activity of man. The latter group again were nothing less than neonomians in the eyes of the former group. This characterizing went even further so that antinomianism became a synonym for orthodoxy and neonomianism a synonym for unorthodoxy. Neonomianism became associated with Arminianism.

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1. Ibid.
2. For more details, see Milroy, op. cit., pp. 250-252.

These categories of doctrinal beliefs and moral attitude are too crudely and abusively constructed to enable one to make any far-reaching conclusions. Usually this division which became visible is indicated as between moderates and evangelicals. The following conclusion can be subscribed:

> The decision (re Simson) gave great offence to the more earnest and evangelical ministers throughout the church. And from this time onward the cleft between a moderate and an evangelical party become more and more clearly marked. The controversy now begun was continued through many generations of the church's history. 1

Where the evangelical party gave greater prominence to doctrinal teaching, the moderate party considered the ethical instruction of greater importance.

A further point of significance of the Simson case is that the Assembly's decision formed one of the recurring charges made against the Church of Scotland, namely, unfaithfulness in maintaining sound doctrine. In the years following the Secession in 1733, this charge assumed the character of one of the main reasons for the Secession.[2] In various declarations, testimonies and pamphlets it was repeated that the "Arminian errors" of the Professor and the neglect of the church to lift up "the standard of a faithful testimony against the prevailing

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1. J. MacPherson, A History of the Church of Scotland (London, 1901), p. 310.
2. For full details of the Secession: A. Gib, The Present Truth: A display of the Secession Testimony in the Three Periods of the Rise, State and Maintenance of that Testimony (Edinburgh, 1774), 2 vols.

errors of the times" compelled the Seceders to take a stand against, and later outside, the Established Church.[1] Whether Simson was a thorough Arminian or not or whether the Church of Scotland was unfaithful or not, the Seceders were convinced that both Simson and the Church were deviating from the gospel of grace and were preaching another gospel of Arminianism and neonomianism.

A final remark on the significance of the Simson trials is connected with the spirit of free inquiry. This attitude of pursuing new and other ways to express theological beliefs, directed the theology of John Cameron and the Aberdeen school of thought. This approach revealed itself much more clearly and markedly in Simson's theology in which he tried to explain and restate scriptural truths in a way directed by reason, and where he indulged in speculation guided by reason. He desired to move out of the narrow limits of the Confession while, at the same time, he claimed to remain true to the Confession. His aim was to interpret theological beliefs in a new way, with reason as one of the instruments thereto. In this respect, the trials of Simson revealed him as one of the first Scottish theologians in the movement of the Enlightenment in Scotland. In fact, there is a direct line from Cameron to Simson via the Aberdeen Doctors in so far as in Cameron and

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1. Act, Declaration and Testimony . . . by some Ministers Associate together for the Exercise of Church Government and Discipline in a Presbyterial Capacity (n.p., 1737), p. 53.

the Aberdeen Doctors the spirit of the coming Enlightenment was already at work in their stressing free inquiry, freedom from dogmatical fetters, indifference to the dogma, moderation, and the high value which they placed on man, his duties and his possibilities. From there it was only a short step to the sentiments of the era of the Enlightenment.

VI

JAMES FRASER AND HIS TREATISE

In 1749 a book which was destined to have a considerable influence upon the course of Scottish ecclesiastical history came from the printing press. This work, published fifty years after the author's death under the title A Treatise on Justifying Faith,[1] had been written by a prisoner on the Bass Rock, James Fraser of Brea.

His Life and Work.

James Fraser[2] was born in the parish of Kirkmichael Ross-shire on 29th July, 1639. His father, James Fraser, attended the General Assembly of Glasgow the year before as elder commissioned by the Presbytery of Inverness. At an early age, the young James came under deep religious impressions, abandoned the study of law and obtained licence as a preacher of the gospel from a presbyterian minister in 1670.

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1. Printed in Edinburgh. Infra this work is referred to as Treatise, 1749.

2. For more biographical details: Memoirs of the Life of the very Reverend Mr. James Fraser of Brea (Edinburgh, 1738); R. King, Covenanters in the North (Aberdeen, 1846); A. Whyte, James Fraser of Brea (Edinburgh, 1911); D. Fraser, "James Fraser of Brea 1639-1699, His Life and Writings with Special Reference to his Theory of Universal Redemption, and its Influence on Religious Thought in Scotland", unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1944; D.N.B., (1959-1960 edition), Vol. VII, pp. 547-648; J.,Andersen, Martyrs of the Bass (Edinburgh, 1848).

It came to the notice of James Sharp, archbishop of St. Andrews, that James Fraser was preaching in conventicles and an order for his apprehension was issued. In 1676 he was brought to the Bass Rock where he was detained for two and a half years.

While on the Bass Rock, Fraser studied oriental languages and acquired a reasonable knowledge of Hebrew and Greek. Here he kept his diary up to date from which his Memoirs were published in Edinburgh in 1738. This autobiography is, as his biographer puts it, "full, from board to board, of God's intricate relations with him and his intricate relations with God."[1] In his Memoirs the quest for experimental religion and his pursuit of personal holiness speak from every page. It was here in captivity that Fraser wrote the book which was to create no little commotion in two communities, the Cameronians and the Anti-Burghers. It is said that his work on justifying faith was written "with no book beside its author but his Bible", and the same biographer calls his hero's treatise a "true masterpiece of apostolical and evangelical and experimental religion."[2] The first part of this work was published in 1722 and the second appeared in 1749 as A Treatise on Justifying Faith.

In July 1679 Fraser was released from captivity on giving an undertaking for obedient conduct, but in December 1681 he was arrested again

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1. J. Whyte, op. cit., p. 220.
2. Ibid., p. 241.

and committed to Blackness Castle as a prisoner until he paid five thousand marks and gave security either to abandon preaching or else to leave the country. In 1689 when the Revolution Settlement brought more tranquillity to Scotland, Fraser became minister of Culross, Perthshire, where he exercised his ministry with diligence, power and earnestness. Ten years after his coming to Culross, he died in Edinburgh on 13th September, 1699.

Apart from the books already mentioned, he also wrote The Lawfulness and Duty of Separation from corrupt Ministers and Churches, and Defence of the Convention of Estates, 1689. The former contains arguments against attending the ministrations of the clergymen who had accepted the conditions imposed on them by the king. The latter work vindicates the declaration that James VII had forfeited his right to the crown causing the throne to become vacant. A sermon in which Fraser attacked episcopacy appeared in print in 1713 under the title Prelacy an Idol. In 1726 his Some Choice Select Meditations was published.

His Controverted Theology.

In Fraser's treatise the underlying and ever-pressing question was, how could a sinner find an immediate and abiding acceptance with God? The answer he found was: Faith in Christ. In the first part of his work which was published in 1722, Fraser dealt with the nature of faith, in

the second part he dwelled on the grounds of faith. He began the second part with a chapter on what were not the foundations of faith, hope, and assurance.[1] In the subsequent chapters he stated positively the grounds of faith, namely Christ's all-sufficiency, Christ's goodwill to sinners, the free promises of God, Christ's death for all and the commands of God.[2]

The theology of Fraser as explicated in his treatise can decidedly be termed Calvinistic. He was even described as an "ultra-Calvinist"[3] and as a theologian who was holding "extreme Calvinistic views".[4] His debt to John Calvin and the Calvinists of his own times, such as Rutherford, Twiss, Dickson and Durham, he readily acknowledged.[5] He believed in and taught the absolute sovereignty of God, the cardinal Calvinist doctrine.[6] In his life and teaching he aimed at the advancement of God's glory. Concerning the doctrine of predestination, Fraser also insisted that election and reprobation were not decrees resting upon God's foreknowledge, but solely upon God's good pleasure and that only the elect would be saved.[7]

The only way in which he differed markedly and remarkably from orthodox Calvinism was in his views on the extent of the atonement. He

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1. Treatise, 1749, pp. 4-10.
2. Ibid., pp. 10ff.
3. D.N.B., (1959-1960 edition), Vol. VII, p. 647.
4. M. Hutchison, The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland: Its Origin and History, 1680-1876 (Edinburgh, 1893), p. 194.
5. Treatise, 1749, pp. 33, 43, 105, 196, 197, 213, 215, 223, 224, 252, etc.
6. Ibid., pp. 84-88.
7. Ibid., "Appendix", pp. 159-270.

developed a detailed theory of universal redemption and it was exactly this scheme of his which in later years became the cause of controversy. Although Fraser's theory of universal redemption appeared also in other of his works, it was only in the second part of his treatise that he elaborated on it. In "An Appendix Concerning the object of Christ's death" which covered 112 pages he stated his beliefs and arguments clearly and copiously.

Stated in a concise and condensed form, Fraser's theory is that all men are fundamentally justified in and through Christ who obeyed and died in the place of all. That means, that Christ offered sufficient satisfaction also to reprobates, who, if the gospel preaching is to be taken seriously, are to be regarded as having an interest in Christ's death. From this it follows, Fraser argues, that salvation can be offered through Christ to all mankind without distinction. Only by accepting that Christ died for everyone can there be a real foundation for the gospel offer.

Though Christ died for all men, it does not follow that all are to be saved. Neither does Fraser's theory make provision for conditional redemption, the condition being the willingness to be saved.[1] Fraser rules out the possibility of universal subjective grace offered to everybody enabling one and all to make use of the means of grace to

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1. Treatise, 1749, pp. 175-182.

salvation.[1] Against this stand Fraser's beliefs that "Christ died formally for the Elect only, for their sakes as it is, John XVII:19, thus Christ died only for the Elect."[2] The elect are the principal and formal objects of his death, while the reprobates are but the secondary material objects of his death.[3]

In many ways Fraser tried to distinguish between the "manners" in which Christ died for elect and reprobate. That He died for all is the common ground. For the reprobate He died in a common way, effecting legal or fundamental justification by His death which was sufficient. For the elect, however, Christ died in a special way, effecting personal justification through his efficacious death. By such distinctions Fraser thought to dissociate himself from the teaching of the Arminians.

His relation to Arminianism.

Fraser's critics, those of his own times and fifty years after his death, were almost unanimous in regarding him as an Arminian and his teaching as unsuccessfully veiled Arminianism. At an early stage he gave offence to John Carstairs who was convinced that Fraser's views of universal redemption were nothing else than Arminianism.[4] Alexander Brodie noted in his diary of 5th September, 1677: "I heard that ther was

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1. Ibid., p. 160.
2. Ibid., p. 268.
3. Ibid.
4. J. Anderson, op. cit., pp. 129-130.

much stir about James Fraser of Brey, and that he was thoght to inclin to Arminianism in som things."[1] During the years following the appearance of his book in 1749, it was attacked from different sides as "containing Arminian principals,"[2] and as expressive of "a new mode of Arminianism upon the head of Universal Redemption."[3]

At the end of the nineteenth century these opinions were virtually repeated by the historian of the Reformed Presbyterian Church who wrote on Fraser's views in the following way:

> In some respects he was so singularly constituted that, holding extreme Calvinistic views on other points, he labours in the work . . . A Treatise on Justifying Faith to establish a theory of Universal Atonement. It is essentially the old Arminianism, but it is presented by Fraser in a new form, and with some startling additions. 4

Before trying to ascertain Fraser's own attitude towards Arminianism it might prove helpful to re-state in a few words the Arminian view of atonement. Over against the notions of an unconditional election and limited atonement prevalent among the more orthodox Calvinists, Arminius and his followers affirmed conditional election on the foresight of God

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1. The Diary of Alexander Brodie of Brodie (Aberdeen, 1843), p. 391.
2. The True State of the Differences Between the Reformed Presbytery and some Brethren who lately Deserted them, together with a Vindication of the Presbytery's Principles (Infra quoted as The True State (Edinburgh, 1753), p. 8.
3. The Proceedings of the Associate Synod at Edinburgh in March and August, 1755 (Edinburgh, 1755), p. iii.
4. Hutchison, op. cit., pp. 194-195.

and partly determined by man's willingness to use the means of grace, and asserted that Christ died for all and everyone giving sufficient grace to all to be saved. The followers of Arminius went even further than Arminius himself by placing such an undue emphasis on free-will that in their view the difference between the saved and the lost was ultimately referable to the human will.

Fraser did not scruple to raise a voice of warning against Arminianism, but urged his countrymen not to attend the ministration of the curates because they preached "some points of Arminianism" and neglected the doctrine of predestination under pretence of its mysteriousness.[1] He saw in the teaching of the Arminians a violation of the gospel, and he equated a man coming to Christ in order to gain victory over certain sins, with "a rotten Papist and deluded Arminian (who) runs in a convenant of works."[2]

He severly attacked what he believed was the Arminian view of free-will, that is, that a man having sufficient means could come to Christ if he wanted to, or could resist if he so desired. Fraser's own belief was that Christ had committed himself to the elect and had accepted the responsibility for them from the Father, therefore he would not leave salvation to man's free will. Opposition to the notion of free-will is boldly offered in the second treatise. He hit out against Papists and

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1. Lawfulness and Duty of Separation from Corrupt Ministers and Churches (Edinburgh, 1744), p. 107.

2. Ibid., p. 160.

Arminians who were not teaching salvation through Christ's merits alone, but who "set up free-will which goes hand in hand with the legal way."[1] Having asserted that God's merciful actions towards men resulted from "the essential Goodness of God which he freely vents,"[2] Fraser thought it necessary to call attention to the erroneous views on man's ability to do good:

> Do not hence conclude any subjective Grace or self-determining Principle in Man to what is good, whither implanted in his Nature as Pelagians think, or assistant and concomitant Grace proceeding from Christ's Merit yet so as to enable man if he will, yet still so as the Man's will determines all, as Jesuites and Arminians suppose. 3

Fraser also disagreed with the Arminians on their view of universal redemption. To him the Arminian universal redemption was "justly odious to a pious soul, and a lover of the Grace of God."[4] His objection was that their universal redemption was in fact conditional redemption, with the condition man's willingness to be saved.[5] These views of the "Arminians and Conditionalists" were, according to Fraser, the cause of the denial of universal redemption by many and their insistence that Christ had died only for the elect.[6] Fraser himself would have neither the Arminian universalism nor the denial of universal redemption.

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1. Treatise, 1749, p. 32.
2. Ibid., p. 83.
3. Ibid., pp. 83-84.
4. Ibid., pp. 147-148.
5. Ibid., pp. 148, 207-208, 226.
6. Ibid., p. 148.

Although Fraser attempted to dissociate himself from the Arminian version of universalism, his position, particularly as stated in the "Appendix", approximated that of the Arminians. He was continuously conscious of the possibility of being grouped together with the Arminians and was always at pains to explain how he differed from them. This did not prevent him from acknowledging that the Arminians had indeed laid hold of a certain truth which the more orthodox Calvinists had tended to ignore. He expressed himself as follows:

> Tho' I abhorr Arminianism and the opinion of an equal eternal good-will to all men, elect and reprobate, yet it may be said that the world meant, 2 Cor. 1:19, which God was reconciling, is the world largely taken, comprehending all and every one of mankind, and not the elect world only; and that God in the Covenant of Redemption by sending his Son to die for mankind, did lay a sufficient foundation and ground for reconciliation of the whole world. 1

Fraser denied that this view was "contrary to the current of the most godly and judicious Protestant divines, contrary to our Confession of Faith, and to the professed doctrine of the Church we live in."[2] The objections against universal redemption, he asserted, were "not so much against what I maintain, as against what Arminius held."[3] In his own opposition to Arminianism, he felt himself very close to the orthodox theologians of the Church of Scotland, and said, "if they reply Durham and Mr. Rutherford are for particular Redemption and against Arminianism

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1. Ibid., pp. 207-208.
2. Ibid., p. 250.
3. Ibid., p. 251.

and Conditional Redemption, so am I too."[1]

The author of A Treatise on Justifying Faith envisaged that his opinion that the elect were the chief although not the only objects of Christ's death would be open to criticism from those holding Arminian views. His own reply was:

> All the Arminian objections are I suppose easily answerable with the distination of special and common Redemption; granting a general common sufficient Redemption according to the Scriptures, and so interpreting them, and denying a general efficacious Redemption. 2

Such a distinction, Fraser believed, revealed the difference between him and the Arminians. Fraser maintained that his arguments could not be used by Arminians for furthering their cause, neither did he himself rely on the Arminians for support. In view of this he felt justified to conclude:

> . . . Arminians are never a whit helped by me, but in the true orthodox opinion of special Redemption further (I shall not say better) explained and cleared; there is nothing derogatory to the Grace, Love, Wisdom or Sovereignty of God, nothing that advances the great Diana of free-will (the life and soul of Arminianism) that can be deduced from anything herein asserted. 3

From these extracts from Fraser's recorded attitude towards orthodox opinion and Arminianism it became clear that he sought to occupy a position midway between the two extremes; on the one hand the rigid Calvinism asserting that Christ had died for the elect alone, and, on

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1. Ibid., p. 252.
2. Ibid., p. 268.
3. Ibid., p. 269.

the other hand, the Arminian universalism holding that by virtue of Christ's death everyone in the world could be saved should he so desire and believe. Fraser's middle way ran on the lines that there was a common redemption, but not a universal redemption in the sense of the Arminian teaching. He insisted that this distinction between common and universal redemption was of cardinal importance, for a common redemption would leave room for a special redemption in which only the elect could share, while a universal redemption would place both elect and reprobate in the same position as to salvation.

In conclusion, it can be agreed with the comment of the scholar asserting that Fraser

> seems to have had a glimmering of the fact that there was an element of truth in Arminianism and in the idea of universal atonement. While denying that he was an Arminian, he maintained, in a certain sense, a common redemption. 1

While Fraser was in his views on common redemption nearer to the Arminian position than to orthodox Calvinism, he can in that respect hardly be described as an Arminian.

His relation to Amyraldism.

The notions of Fraser on the extent of Christ's death were neither strict Calvinism nor Arminianism. There is a school of thought to which his system shows closer resemblance, namely, the school of John Cameron

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1. H. MacPherson, Covenanters under Persecution (Edinburgh, 1923), p. 75.

and Moïse Amyraldus. Fraser's theory is in all essential points not to be distinguished from their doctrine of hypothetical redemption.

The affinity of Fraser's views and those of the French school has been noted by various scholars. Describing the thoughts of Amyraldus "as an attempt to find a middle ground between Augustinianism and Arminianism" and by doing so opening the way "to the objections taken to both systems", an eighteenth century writer saw in the treatise of Fraser "a work which substantially reproduced the theory of the continental divine".[1] In the same way another scholar referring to Fraser's treatise published in 1749 said that "its references to the Atonement were distinctly Amyraldian."[2]

Amyraldism was an endeavour to find a golden means between two theories neither of which was considered to do justice to the scriptural evidence and the nature of man. The aim of Fraser was the same. In the "Appendix" Fraser proposed and considered five opinions concerning the object of Christ's death, ranging from the one extreme that "Christ died equally for all, elect and reprobate" to the other extreme that Christ died only for the elect."[3] He himself chose to reject these propositions as they stood, but offered his own constituted from certain elements of truths contained in the rejected statements. The anonymous

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1. C.G. McCrie, The Church of Scotland: Her Divisions and Reunions (Edinburgh, 1901), pp. 45-46.
2. D. Beaton, "'The Marrow of Modern Divinity' and the Marrow Controversy", R.S.C.H.S. (Edinburgh, 1926), Vol. I, p. 129.
3. Treatise, 1749, p. 160.

publisher of A Treatise on Justifying Faith had no doubts that Fraser's book would lead the reader on

> a middle path betwixt two extreme dangers, so that the candidate reader thro' the blessing of God may be saved from splitting upon the rocks of Arminian and Popish errors on the one side, and right-hand extremes that many divines in former periods hath gone into, who were esteemed orthodox concerning the extent of Christ's death. [1]

Although Fraser felt that he could not fully agree with Cameron's proposition, Christus pro te mortuus est si tu id credas,[2] he approved of the mediatory views of the professors of Saumur.[3] His own beliefs that God, in some sense, wills and desires that all men should repent and be saved through Christ offered to the whole world, but that regenerating grace which follows upon election is not granted to all men, but only to the elect who on account of that attain salvation, seem to be fully in harmony with Amyraldism. Both Amyraldus and Fraser confidently believed their schemes to be truer to Scripture and in a better position to solve the difficulties inherent in the other systems of their day.

The Ecclesiastical Situation.

At the time of the appearance of Fraser's treatise in the middle of the eighteenth century, three other presbyterian groups shared the ecclesiastical field with the Church of Scotland. They were the Reformed Presbytery and the two Associate Synods. As the influence of

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1. Ibid., p. 7.
2. Ibid., pp. 162, 175.
3. Ibid., pp. 250-251.

Fraser's view manifested itself in two of these groups, it is necessary to give a short narrative of the rise and growth of these bodies.

The year 1733 brought the first serious severance in the Church of Scotland and marked the beginning of a new era in Scottish presbyterianism. A variety of causes led to this event. The particular point of issue at that time was the one of patronage and the method of appointing ministers in vacant parishes. An Act passed by the General Assembly of 1732 had the effect that the right to elect and call a minister became more vested in the Protestant heritors and elders or, in royal burghs, with the magistrates, town councils and kirk sessions, and less stress was laid on the right of the congregation to acquire the minister they desired.[1]

The next year Ebenezer Erskine, in a sermon before the Synod of Perth and Stirling, attacked the Assembly's Act in unrestrained language.[2] This started a turmoil in the church resulting in rebukes and admonitions, protests and representations and culminated in the suspension of four ministers, Ebenezer Erskine, William Wilson, Alexander Moncrief and James Fisher in August of the same year.[3] On 16th November, 1733 the four censured ministers handed in a paper to the Assembly in which they stated that they were obliged "to make a secession." Three weeks later, on 6th December, they constituted themselves into a presbytery which

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1. A. Gib, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 25.
2. For the text of the sermon see, Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 381-404.
3. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 31.

became known as the Associate Presbytery.[1]

There were also other causes underlying the secession from the Church of Scotland. In defending their actions, the seceding ministers deemed themselves justified in going back upon matters which had taken place many years before. These matters were largely of a doctrinal and credal nature. The Seceders testified that they had dissociated themselves from the "prevailing party" who were "pursuing such measures as do actually corrupt, or have the most direct tendency to corrupt the doctrine contained in our excellent Confessions of Faith."[2] One of their main complaints was the Assembly's decision in 1720 on the Marrow of Modern Divinity, forbidding the recommendation of the book by preaching, writing or printing.[3] One of the Assembly's objections against the book was that it taught universal redemption. The sound intention of the Assembly was expressed two years later when it was stated that the Assembly had "no design to recede from the received doctrine",[5] but the Seceders were convinced that the condemnation of the book followed by the reprimanding of the ministers who defended it was in fact a repudiation of the gospel teaching.

Intimately connected with this was the complaint that the Church of Scotland was "tolerating the erroneous, and supporting and countenancing

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1. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 36.
2. A Testimony to the Doctrine, Worship, Government and Discipline of the Church of Scotland (n.p. and n.d.), p. 53.
3. The Principal Acts of the General Assembly, 1720, p. 12.
4. Ibid., pp. 9-10.
5. Ibid., 1722, p. 14.

error", in respect of both John Simson and Archibald Campbell, Professor of Church History at St. Andrews.[1]

Gradually the group of dissentient ministers grew and in 1740 eight seceders, including Ebenezer Erskine, Ralph Erskine and Thomas Mair, were finally deposed and prohibited from exercising the ministry in the Church of Scotland.[2]

In 1742, twenty years after the Marrow dispute, the Associate Presbytery thought it proper to revive the controversy. This was accomplished partly for the sake of exposing the "prevailing party" in the Church of Scotland, partly for justifying their secession, and partly for vindicating in a proper manner the doctrine of sovereign grace. This was done in a most elaborate deed passed by the Associate Presbytery on 21st October 1742.[3] The pressing need for a restatement of the doctrine of grace was obvious to those who believed that the doctrine had been constantly under attack since the time of John Simson "who had taught a scheme of Pelagian and Arminian errors."[4] This Arminian doctrine, the Associate Presbytery claimed, "was in such a general request that some have ventured openly to recommend these principles without being noticed by any of the judicatories of the church."[5] The Act of 1742 aimed, according to its drafters, to

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1. Act and Proceedings of the Associate Presbytery met at Edinburgh May 1739, Containing their Declinature (Edinburgh, 1739), p. 16.
2. The Principal Acts of the General Assembly, 1740, p. 9.
3. Act of the Associate Presbytery Concerning the Doctrine of Grace (Edinburgh, 1744).
4. Ibid., p. viii.
5. Ibid., p. ix.

contribute something "to put a stop to the spreading of legal and Arminian doctrine wherewith the whole land is like to be overflown."[1]

The Act rejected universal redemption and agreed with the Marrow which "plainly teacheth . . . that Christ represented and suffered for none but the elect."[2] This they qualified to some extent when they added that "although the purchase and application of Redemption be peculiar to the elect, yet the warrant to receive Christ is common to all."[3] In the Assembly's opposition to the Marrow theology they perceived a movement "whereby a door is opened to Arminian and Socinian errors which like a flood have overflown the church of the land."[4]

In the "Auchterarder creed" they saw an attempt "to put a stop . . . to the spreading of Arminian and Baxterian doctrine which was then vented in many places of the Kingdom."[5] The condemnation of the proposition contained therein, i.e. "that it is not sound and orthodox to teach that we must forsake sin in order to our coming to Christ and instating us in a Covenant with God", was considered by the Act "as the very soul of Neanomian and Arminian doctrine."[6]

On 23rd December, 1743, the National Covenant was renewed by the Seceders. One of the reasons for the confessing of sins and binding

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1. Ibid., p. 13.
2. Ibid., p. 21.
3. Ibid., p. 23.
4. Ibid., p. 41.
5. Ibid., p. 14.
6. Ibid., p. 16.

themselves anew to the Covenant was "the dreadful prevalency of Deism," "the seed of Arianism" and "a general growth of Arminianism" in the country.[1] In 1745 the Seceders constituted their three presbyteries into a synod and from then on their group went under the name of the Associate Synod.[2]

Four years after this a breach occurred in the Associate Synod. The cause of this was a violent disagreement as to whether it was sinful or lawful for a Seceder to take an oath required of burgesses of Edinburgh, Glasgow and Perth, whereby they accede to profess and allow the true religion publicly preached within the realm and authorized by the laws. Some maintained that this would imply an approval of the Established Church with all its doctrinal errors and laxity.

It was on this rock that the Associate Synod split. Those who allowed the lawfulness of the oath, and these included the two Erskines, organised themselves into an ecclesiastical body called the Associate Synod, popularly known as the Burghers. The other group, including Thomas Mair and Adam Gib, maintained that the oath was not compatible with the principles of the Secession. Their group constituted themselves as the General Associate Synod, and became commonly known as the Anti-Burghers.[3] These two ecclesiastical bodies, it was asserted, "hated

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1. Act of the Associate Presbytery for Renewing the National Covenant of Scotland and the Solemn League of the Three Nations (Edinburgh, 1744, p. 108.
2. J. McKerrow, History of the Secession Church (Glasgow, 1841), p. 196.
3. Ibid., pp. 208-226.

each other worse than the Jesuits did the Jansenists"[1] so that in 1750 Ebenezer Erskine was again condemned by the Anti-Burghers and "solemnly handed over to Satan."[2]

The other church group not associated with the Church of Scotland at the time of the publication of Fraser's book in 1749 was the Reformed Presbytery. This ecclesiastical body which, in one form or another, had existed from Reformation times, received its first organized form in the years circa 1680. One of the leaders was Richard Cameron, a field-preacher trained in Holland. During the episcopal period he and his associates stood firmly on the principles of presbyterianism, loyalty to the Covenant, and anti-Erastianism. His followers, the Cameronians or Society Fold, gathered themselves in religious societies throughout the country.[3]

The Revolution Settlement which came into operation when William accepted the crown of Scotland in 1689 did not satisfy many Cameronians. They felt that the Settlement which had passed over the Covenant in silence was a betrayal of all those who had fought and died for the principles therein contained. Also the religious toleration upon which William insisted was unacceptable to them.[4]

For the discharge of ministerial functions the Society Folk were

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1. J. Ramsay, Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century (Edinburgh, 1888), Vol. II, p. 13.
2. A.J. Campbell, Two Centuries of the Church of Scotland (Paisley, 1930), p. 62.
3. Hutchison, op. cit., pp. 45-55.
4. Ibid., pp. 81-92.

dependent on nonconformist ministers. At the Revolution Settlement these ministers went back to the Established Church and for a period of sixteen years after this the Societies were without any ordained ministers or licensed preachers.[1] In 1706 John McMillan, a minister deposed in 1703 for disorderly and schismatical practices, joined the ranks of the Cameronians after he had been called officially by the "United Societies and General Correspondencies of the Suffering Remnant of the true Presbyterian Church in Scotland."[2] Until 1743 McMillan was the only ordained minister of the United Societies but in that year Thomas Nairn, once a minister of the Church of Scotland who went over to the Seceders in 1737, found a welcome in the Societies.[3] Even in the close fellowship of the Society Folk he could find no repose, and in 1751 he was back in the fold of the Church of Scotland. In the same year that Nairn became co-minister with McMillan, the Cameronians reorganized themselves and formed the Reformed Presbytery.[4] Ten years later when the breach occurred, the Presbytery numbered six ministers, John McMillan; John McMillan, his son; Alexander Marshall; James Hall; Hugh Innes; and John Cuthbertson.[5]

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1. Ibid., pp. 108-110.
2. Ibid., pp. 142-152.
3. Ibid., pp. 184-187.
4. Ibid., p. 187.
5. W.J. Couper, "A Breach in the Reformed Presbytery", R.S.C.H.S. (Edinburgh, 1926), Vol. I, p. 2.

The Schism in the Reformed Presbytery.

Between the time of the coming into being of the Reformed Presbytery in 1743 and the appearance of Fraser's book in 1749, dogmatical differences seem to have been the subject of tedious discussions by the Presbytery. The cause of the trouble was believed to be a Society in Edinburgh which advocated fervently "some new schemes in religion" and for that purpose distributed letters to the other Societies to influence them to adopt the same views.[1] One of the new opinions was that Christ had died not only for the elect but for everyone, and that He had satisfied for the sins of all men.[2]

To these views, the eighty-four year old John McMillan offered untiring opposition. It was even held that he was responsible for the disturbance of the peace of the Presbytery by imposing his opinions and his will on the members in a dictatorial and petulant way. The discussions and the atmosphere in which the discussions took place was indicative of a growing cleft between the two parties.[3]

James Fraser's book which appeared during these tumultuous times, did nothing to pour oil on troubled waters. On the contrary, it poured oil on the smouldering fire within the Presbytery by furnishing McMillan Sr. with "a new subject of disputation." He urged the Presbytery to condemn the "Appendix" as containing Arminian principles because Fraser

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1. Observations on a Wolf in Sheep-skin (n.p., 1753), p. 3.
2. Ibid., p. 7.
3. The True State, p. 4.

taught that Christ had died for every one and that he had bought even the reprobates.[1]

The Presbytery was not eager either to discuss or to condemn the teaching contained in the "Appendix". It was not that they were opposed to McMillan's proposal to condemn Arminianism, but the group who favoured Fraser's book asserted that although they would readily censure Arminianism, "it was not so fully agreed that Mr. Fraser's doctrine was justly chargeable therewith."[2]

On 7th April, 1753, the Presbytery met again to attempt to finalise the matter. It was proposed that the Presbytery should issue a general condemnation of Arminian tenets, whether expressed in Fraser's book or in any other book, thus sparing the Presbytery the trouble of examining the "Appendix".[3] Such a proposed general statement was rejected by some members who insisted on a decision concerning the "Appendix" in particular. After much time had been spent the following formula was put to the Presbytery: "Whether the "Appendix" to Mr. Fraser's treatise on faith favours the doctrine of Arminian universal redemption and is therefore dangerous to be perused by the people." Even this formulation met with objections especially the term "Arminian universal redemption."[4] Finally the following form was agreed upon and put to the vote:

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1. Ibid., p. 8.
2. Ibid., p. 8.
3. Ibid., p. 9.
4. Ibid., p. 10.

> Whether Mr. Fraser's maintaining that the Lord Jesus Christ satisfied for the sins of all mankind so that this satisfaction might be competent to be proposed to them in the Gospel, and pleaded by them for their justification, and that this satisfaction is the ground and formal reason upon which faith is founded, be a dangerous doctrine. 1

The two McMillans and three elders voted for the affirmative of the proposition carrying with it a condemnation of Fraser's views; Hall and two elders voted for the negative.[2] Being moderator, Innes had no vote, but it is known that he would have sided with the minority. Marshall, the other member of the Presbytery, was absent.

The minority refused to abide by the decision of the Presbytery. They charged their opposers of "a gross and dangerous error, namely that the Lord Jesus Christ did not satisfy for the sins of all mankind."[3] They also produced arguments that "the elect are not exclusively the object of salvation", but at the same time they did their utmost to dissociate themselves from Arminianism and maintained that "to assert the universality of Christ's satisfaction in respect of its object, has no necessary connection with the Arminian error."[4] This "error" is further described as the giving of sufficient grace to all, enabling all to believe.

The rift widened and a compromise became completely out of the question. The next day, the Moderator and the three minority-voters

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1. Ibid.
2. Ibid., p. 11.
3. Ibid., p. 15.
4. Ibid., p. 27.

removed themselves and claimed to be the true Reformed Presbytery, while at the same time the majority-group maintained that they were the real Reformed Presbytery.[1]

The minority group was undoubtedly in favour of Fraser's scheme. The new Presbytery was even referred to as "wholly constituted on the ground of Universal Redemption."[2] An anonymous author calling himself "a lover of the good old way" remarked that some saw in the "new scheme" which had caused the schism, an advancing "to the Arminian way."[3] Perhaps one could not describe the "new scheme" of the new Presbytery as Arminianism, but rather as Amyraldism or Fraserism.

The Controversy among the Anti-Burghers.

Fraser's book and the views expressed therein did not only contribute largely to the breach in the Reformed Presbytery but also made itself severly felt in the General Associate Synod (Anti-Burghers.) The Associate Presbytery of Edinburgh within which bounds the "new scheme" made its most pronounced appearance, thought it necessary to take the situation into consideration at their meeting in December 1753. They expressed their alarm at the "revival of Arminianism in the Article

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1. For the history of the respective groups after the schism, see Hutchison, op. cit., and W.J. Couper, "A Breach in the Reformed Presbytery, 1753", R.S.C.H.S., (Edinburgh, 1926), Vol. I, pp. 8-28.
2. A. Gib, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 135.
3. Observations on a Wolf in Sheep-skin (n.p., 1753), p. 3.

of Universal Redemption" which manifested itself in Reformed Presbytery and unanimously resolved to submit an overture in this respect to the forthcoming meeting of their Synod.[1]

In the meantime it became clear that the adherents to the "new scheme" were notconfined to the Reformed Presbytery, but that they were also to be found within the bosom of the Anti-Burghers. The focal point of the attention came to be Thomas Mair, minister of Orwell. While still a boy, he had helped to transcribe the manuscripts of Fraser's treatise. In later years the teaching of Fraser, particularly his views on the extent of the atonement, seems to have exercised a powerful influence on him.[2] Mair had from the very beginning taken a deep interest in the struggles of the Seceders and had joined their ranks in 1737.[3] Fraser's book became the theme of discussion among the Anti-Burghers and an exchange of letters between Adam Gib and Thomas Mair took place. A letter from Mair to Gib dated 26th October, 1753 discussed what was called "Brae's Scheme". Gib returned an answer on 3rd January, 1754, expressing his conviction that Fraser's views were nothing but an endorsement and exposition of one of the five articles of the Arminians.[4]

When the Anti-Burghers Synod convened at Edinburgh on 18th April, 1754, the overture from the Presbytery of Edinburgh was tabled. This

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1. A. Gib, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 137.
2. The Banner of the Truth or Scottish Calvinistic Magazine (Glasgow, 1843), p. 391.
3. McKerrow, op. cit., p. 111.
4. A. Gib, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 274.

representation expressed concern over the revival of the "Arminian scheme of Universal Atonement and Redemption" in a new and more ensnaring form. The Presbytery further requested the Synod to consider upon a proper course to be taken for guarding the people under their care, and particularly their candidates for the holy ministry against "the imminent danger from the said revival of Arminianism". In order to assist in this, the Presbytery proposed that the Synod might "turn the point of Gospel truth against the chief branches of this new mode of Arminianism by asserting particularly the opposite doctrines of the Lord's Word."[1]

Along with their overture the Presbytery submitted a draft of seven articles, bearing upon the errors contained in the treatise of Fraser of Brae and the vindication of it by the section of the Reformed Presbytery. These articles were incorporated in the "Act . . . in opposition to Arminian errors upon the head of universal redemption" passed by the Synod at their Edinburgh meeting on 18th April, 1754. In these articles it was laid down that "Christ has redeemed none others by his death but the elect only"; "that Christ and the benefits of his purchase cannot be divided", and "that there is but one special redemption by the death of Christ for all the objects thereof, as he died in one of the same respect for all those for whom he in any respect

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1. Act of the Associate Synod at Edinburgh, April 18, 1754, Containing an Assertion of some Gospel-Truths, in Opposition to Arminian Errors, upon the Head of Universal Redemption (Edinburgh, 1754), pp. 4-5.

died."[1] Despite the exclusiveness of the redemption by Christ, the Act emphasized the free offer of eternal life to all the hearers of the gospel and the equal and immediate warrant given to all to make a particular application of Christ by a true and living faith. The compilators of the Act expressed their belief in the following way:

> The Gospel offer and call, containing the warrant of faith, cannot require or infer any Universal Atonement and Redemption as to purchase, but are altogether consistent with and conformed unto the Scripture doctrine of Particular Redemption. 2

While these seven articles were under discussion by the Synod, Mair expressed his disagreement to various of them and declared his dissatisfaction with the Act as a whole. He formally lodged a complaint at the following meeting of the Synod in August, 1754 and explained his reasons for dissenting from the decisions of the Synod.[3] He stated that he was not prepared to defend every proposition in Fraser's book but he objected to the Synod's description of Fraser's views as "a new mode of Arminianism." He would rather say that Fraser's scheme is "as contrary to Arminianism as light to darkness."[4] With Fraser he persisted in the belief that "Christ in some sense died for all mankind."[5]

The Synod postponed the debate on Mair's reasons for dissent until the next meeting on 4th March, 1755 where Mair offered a second paper

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1. Ibid., pp. 6-9.
2. Ibid., p. 9.
3. T. Mair, Reasons of Dissent . . . from the Act of the Associate Synod anent Doctrine, April 18th, 1754 (Edinburgh, 1756), pp. 1-52.
4. Ibid., p. ii.
5. Ibid., p. 52.

containing further reasons why he could not acquiesce to the views and proceedings of the Synod.[1] In this document Mair repeated his conviction that while it is true that the great, primary, direct and special design and end of the death of Christ concerned the elect and them alone, all men, and particularly all hearers of the Gospel, shared a common interest, in some sense, in the death of Christ. He renounced the Arminians' "anti-scriptural tenet of Christ's dying equally for all", but continued to be of the mind that "several of the Scriptures express in universal terms anent the extent of Christ's death are applicable unto the . . . ordinate sufficiency". He thought that even the divines at the Synod of Dort had not objected to such an interpretation.[2]

Mair's paper was read and his reasons deliberated, but the Synod found reason to complain that "he neither absolutely refuses nor acknowledges any of those articles . . . so that the Synod is still kept much in the dark as to what is really the scheme of principles which he holds."[3] Notwithstanding this lack of light the Synod found it expedient to prohibit him from teaching or venting his views and to withdraw his paper of dissent at the next Synod in August 1755.[4]

At this Synod Mair declared that he did not feel himself free to

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1. Ibid., pp. 53-122.
2. Ibid., pp. 57-58.
3. The Proceedings of the Associate Synod at Edinburgh in March and August 1755, Concerning the Rev. Mr. Thomas Mair . . . (Edinburgh, 1755), p. 36.
4. Ibid., p. 39.

fall away from those doctrines condemned by the Synod, neither could he be prevented from teaching what he believed to be the scriptural truths.[1]

The Synod, in the firm belief that Mair was maintaining erroneous doctrine, suspended him from exercising the holy ministry.[2] Commenting on Mair's scheme of common redemption, the Synod remarked:

> The foresaid way of teaching universal Redemption, as for all men alike, is all the way of it which had been commonly heard of before that time; while thus the old Arminians did not scruple to speak out their scheme intelligibly. And what else can Mr. Mair's new way of it amount to? 3

The suspension of Mair did not terminate the controversy. Again and again the case came before the Synod whose patience was fast running out. In April 1757, three years after the passing of the Act concerning Arminian errors, he was deposed from his office and ceased to have any connection with the Anti-Burghers Synod.[4]

On 14th February, 1768, Thomas Mair died. An elegy of 48 stanzas of 4 lines each which versified the theology of the deceased, praised his orthodoxy and deplored the prosecution he had endured, was published. It is obviously enough completely devoid of any literary merit whatsoever, but an extract is given below because it seems to give the essence of his views on the extent of the death of Christ:

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1. Ibid., p..41.
2. Ibid., p. 43.
3. Ibid., p. 113.
4 McKerrow, op. cit., p. 266.

That Christ in some sense dy'd for all
'Twas said he did maintain;
Said others, this imports that He
In some sense dy'd in vain.

His great and just ambition was
T' exalt the grace of God
And to commend to sinners lost
The virtue of Christ's blood.

Meanwhile, the truth he daily preach'd
Which numbers can attest,
The elect and they only are
Saved by the Death of Christ.

They and they alone are saved
Unto eternal life
While reprobates who were not chos'n
Shall die without relief. 1

One cannot fail to note the identity of Fraser's and Mair's teaching. Although Mair declared that he could neither understand nor subscribe everything in Fraser's treatise, he, like Fraser, insisted that there was a common and a special redemption, a dying of Christ in some sense for all but primarily and effectively for the elect. To brand him as a "heretic"[2] for holding such views is expressive of excessive doctrinal zeal bordering on bigotry.

The Criticism of Adam Gib.

In view of what has so far been said on the significance and influence of Fraser's treatise, it would seem an understatement to

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1. An Elegy upon the Death of the Reverend Mr. Thomas Mair Minister of the Gospel at Orwell, who died February 14th, 1768 (n.p. and n.d.), pp. 3-5.

2. The Banner of Truth or Scottish Calvinistic Magazine (Glasgow, 1848), p. 434.

assert that "the most important result of its production was the theological discussion which it brought from the pen of Adam Gib."[1] But the annotations of Gib are of value in so far as they supply additional information regarding the attitude of the Seceders towards Fraser's book as well as towards Arminianism.

Adam Gib, "the John Knox of the Secession"[2] was born in 1714, joined the Seceders in 1735 and became the leader of the Anti-Burghers section after the breach in 1747.[3] It was only in 1774 that he in all earnest took up the pen against Fraser's views. In his work, The Present Truth covering two volumes, the first volume gives a history of the rise and progress of the Secession, the second volume deals with the maintenance of the Secession testimony.

A large section of the second volume is concerned with "Arminian errors upon the head of Universal Redemption". Discussing Fraser's treatise published in 1749, he said:

> In that book and chiefly in the long Appendix to the fifth Chapter of it, the Arminian point of Universal Redemption is largely set forth, but in somewhat of a new form, as the author had found himself obliged, in answering objections against that doctrine, to make it up by some very horrible positions. 4

Gib then proceeded to outline Fraser's theory of universal

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1. J. Walker, The Theology and Theologians of Scotland (Edinburgh, 1872), pp. 49-50.
2. D. Scott, Annals and Statistics of the Original Secession Church (Edinburgh, 1886), p. 11.
3. D.M. Forrester, "Adam Gib, the Anti-Burgher", R.S.C.H.S. (Glasgow, 1941), Vol. VII, pp. 141-169.
4. A. Gib, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 131-132.

redemption and remarked on the "warm debates upon the Arminian doctrine" in the Reformed Presbytery and the subsequent breach.[1] Summing up his arguments against universal redemption, he asserted that Scripture afforded no ground for it although isolated texts might appear to support it. Continuing his argument, he said:

> Moreover, the point of Universal Redemption is no way preferable to the other Arminian points in respect of seeming countenance by some expressions of Scripture, as broken off from their connection, and taken absolutely according to their first appearance. Yea, the wicket doctrine about the man's free-will in conversion (which indeed goes natively along with the universal point), - has ten times more of that seeming countenance. 2

In the opinion of Gib, Fraser's theory concerning the extent of redemption was just one of the five Arminian articles, completely unwarranted by Scripture and flatly contradicted by the Confessions of Faith.[3]

Fraser's positive claim that his views were not at variance with the Confession was severly criticized by Gib. He pointed out that Fraser himself had admitted that his terminology differed from that of the Confessions, particularly his distinction of "common" and "special" benefits of the death of Christ. To Gib this alone was an indication of an irreconcilable contradiction between Fraser's theory and the Confessions, particularly in the case where the Confessions held that none but the elect were redeemed compared with Fraser's maintaining

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1. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 134.
2. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 187.
3. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 274.

that all were redeemed by Christ though in the end only the elect would be saved.[1]

Gib realized that Fraser's intention was to account in a proper way for the general and free offer of the gospel, but according to Gib, Fraser had not succeeded. Gib expressed this view as follows:

> Yet all the gospel offers which can proceed upon this scheme prove to be a mere chaos of absurdity and self-contradiction, which tend to lead sinners out of the plain way of the gospel, so as to leave them in the waste howling wilderness of corrupt reasoning and inventions. 2

While Gib was aware of the difference between Fraser's universalism and Arminian universalism, he considered these differences as immaterial. To his mind Fraser's system was just the old Arminianism revived but veiled in a cloud of ambiguous terms giving it a scriptural appearance.

The Significance of the Treatise.

In this closing paragraph a short word on the aim and influence of Fraser's treatise will serve at the same time to indicate the significance of his work.

The underlying argument of those who cherish views of universal atonement or common atonement seems to be this: since all men are invited to believe in Christ, Christ must have died for all men. If Christ did not die for all men, and yet all are invited to believe, then those for whom he did not die are invited to believe what is not true,

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1. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 274.
2. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 289.

and were it possible for themto believe they would find themselves deceived.

That this was also Fraser's conviction is undeniable. From his Calvinistic view that Christ had died for the elect only, and from his firm belief that the real foundation for the gospel offer was the sacrifice of Christ, Fraser wrought his theory of common redemption bringing both elect and reprobate under the gospel call. Briefly stated, Fraser held that Christ had died for the reprobates so that they by their rejection of the gospel might fall under a more tremendous doom; Christ had died for the elect so that they by their acceptance of the gospel call might enjoy the glory and blessedness of God's grace. Viewed in such a way, Fraser maintained, it cannot be said that Christ had died in vain for the reprobates.[1]

This scheme of Fraser met with both praise and scorn, defence and attack, during the eighteenth century. It caused the Reformed Presbytery to be rent asunder, it created conflict in the Associate Synod and resulted in the deposition of Thomas Mair. It was stigmatized as Arminianism and experienced the most unsparing opposition from the Seceders who had defended the Marrow, a book criticized for its terminology tending to support universal redemption.[2] Just like the

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1. Treatise, 1749, pp. 223-224.
2. A Sober Inquiry into the Grounds of the Present Differences in the Church of Scotland (n.p., 1723), pp. 117-118.

Marrow, Fraser held that while all sinners had a real right to Christ and his promises, only the elect would be saved. It is true, however, that the Marrow-men in spite of their phraseology giving the impression of an inclination to universalism, were holding particular redemption, whereas Fraser maintained a common and a particular redemption. In this Fraser followed the tracks of his countryman, John Cameron, and the school of Amyraldus who tried to steer clear of the extreme views of both Calvinism and Arminianism on the extent of the atonement.

The ejection of Thomas Mair from the fellowship of the Seceders did not signify a complete rejection of the views of James Fraser. This "bizarre doctrine of Redemption"[1] was also favoured by George Thomson, who had been one of Mair's schoolmasters. When Mair was condemned by the Anti-Burghers, Thomson took his stand with the Burghers. In 1782 he published a tract in which he cautiously aired his sympathies with Fraser's views.[2] During the fourth decade of the nineteenth century the discussion of universal redemption was brought back into the United Secession Church after a charge of erroneous doctrine on the subject of the atonement was raised against a minister.[3] From then on universal atonement was frequently debated, supported and refuted by various ministers, also in the Church of Scotland.[4]

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1. J. MacLeod, "Theology in the Early Days of the Secession", R.S.C.H.S., (Glasgow, 1944), Vol. VIII, p. 7.
2. Ibid., p. 8.
3. The Banner of the Truth or Scottish Calvinistic Magazine (Glasgow, 1848), p. 438.
4. Burleigh, op. cit., pp. 332-333.

A historian of the Reformed Presbyterian Church writing in 1893 remarked on the revival of the views on universal atonement in this way:

> It can hardly escape notice how closely the opinions held by the less orthodox part of the (Reformed) Presbytery resembled those that were the cause of keen discussion about fifty years ago in the United Secession Church in which something like a two-fold satisfaction, under the form of the general and special reference of the Atonement, had a very prominent place. In earlier Reformation discussions it was called Amyraldism. 1

What was called Amyraldism in the seventeenth century revived a century later in Scotland as Fraserism. The exact and direct influence of Fraser's views in the nineteenth century is not easily detected and determined, but one is inclined to agree with the Scottish theologian's opinion: "I think Fraser left more traces of himself on our theology than we commonly suppose."[2]

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1. Hutchison, op. cit., p. 197.
2. Walker, op. cit., p. 50.

VII

JOHN WESLEY AND SCOTLAND

The man who looked upon the whole world as his parish, crossed the Tweed in 1751 for his first visit to Scotland. This man was John Wesley, whose heart was "strangely warmed" on the evening of 24th May, 1738, when he experienced the conviction that his sins were forgiven and that he was saved by Christ alone.[1] The flame kindled in his heart became an almost consuming fire enabling him to become one of the most used instruments in the religious revival and the propagation of religious knowledge in Great Britain.

Considering that John Wesley, an avowed Arminian, visited Scotland twenty-two times between 1751 and 1790, the last time a year before his death, it is necessary to attempt to ascertain and appraise his influence and the impact of his Arminianism upon Scottish life and religion.

His Indebtedness to Arminius.

"It is well-known that John Wesley was the chief instrument in the revival and extension of the doctrines of evangelical Arminianism

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1. The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M., ed. N. Curnock (London, 1938), Vol. i, p. 475 (Infra referred to as Journal). For recent biographies on John Wesley's early life, see V.H.H. Green, The Young Mr. Wesley (London, 1961); M. Schmidt, John Wesley : A Theological Biography, trans. N.P. Goldhawk (London, 1962), Vol. I.

as opposed in many points to a rigid Calvinism", wrote the biographer of Susanna, the mother of John Wesley.[1] The term "evangelical" in this sense could be defined as an uncompromising zeal for the salvation of sinners, the rescuing of the perishing, and the shepherding of those who had come under the impression of the gospel which proclaimed the love of God, the repentance of man, and the pursuing of a holy life. To ascertain whether the term "Arminianism" could be applied to the teaching of Wesley, one should first, before examining his views as such, try to trace the influence of Arminius on Wesley. Some of these influences could have stemmed directly from Wesley's acquaintance with the works and thoughts of Arminius, others could have affected Wesley indirectly, coming by way of the writings of Arminius's followers.

Scanning the journals, letters, sermons and other publications of Wesley, one does not find direct quotations from the works of Arminius, or a direct statement by Wesley that he had read something of Arminius himself. From this it should not be concluded that he did not have first-hand knowledge of the views of Arminius. Although a list of books read during the years 1725-1734 does not mention any of the works of Arminius,[2] and although a further list of books mentioned in his Journal as having been read by him reveals nothing regarding the writings of Arminius,[3] Wesley must have been acquainted with some of the

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1. J. Kirk, The Mother of the Wesleys (London, n.d.), p. 248.
2. For this list see Green, op. cit., pp. 305-319.
3. For this list see Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society, Vol. IV.

publications of Arminius. The reason for this assertion is his pamphlet What is an Arminian[1] published in 1779 when bitter attacks were made on him as being an Arminian. In the fifth paragraph he gave an abridged account of the life of Arminius. He pleaded for a proper understanding and correct use of terms in the Calvinist-Arminian controversy, and said: "How can any man know what Arminius held, who has never read one page of his writings?" One would be justified to infer from these words that Wesley, while writing on Arminianism, would not allow himself to be condemned by his own words. Undoubtedly Wesley possessed some knowledge of the works of Arminius.

On 1st January, 1778, Wesley's magazine, which he was bold enough to entitle The Arminian Magazine, appeared. The aim of this publication was to maintain and illustrate that "God willeth all men to be saved." For this purpose, Wesley had in mind the publication of a number of tracts written during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in which the belief in a general atonement was outlined. In pursuance of this plan, the first number of The Arminian Magazine opened with "A Sketch of the Life of Arminius taken from Peter Bertius' Funeral Oration on the Interment of Arminius (Leyden, 22nd October 1609)".

Introducing the "Sketch", Wesley remarked:

We know of nothing more proper to introduce a work of this kind

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1. Theological Works of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M., ed. T. Jackson, (London, 1829-1831), Vol. X, pp. 358-361. (Infra referred to as Works).

> than a sketch of the life and death of Arminius with whom those who mention his name with the utmost dignity are commonly quite unacquainted of whom they know no more than of Hermes Tresmegistus.

Probably Wesley acquired these details of Arminius from one of the collections of the works of Arminius to which the funeral oration of Bertius was added. The further editions of The Arminian Magazine up to the time of Wesley's death reveal no more references to either Arminius or the Remonstrants.

There is evidence that Wesley bore knowledge of the Synod of Dort and of the works of some of the Remonstrants. Already in 1725, Samuel Wesley, John's father, wrote to him at Oxford recommending to him Grotius's commentaries on the Bible.[1] That he did follow his father's advice, if not at that time, then later in his life, is shown in a letter dated 4th March, 1749, in which he mentioned the commentary of Grotius on Mark.[2] On 6th July, 1741, Wesley recorded in his Journal: "Looking for a book in the College Library, I took down by mistake the works of Episcopius, which opening upon an account of the Synod of Dort, I believed it might be useful to read it through."[3] In 1777 he again mentioned Grotius and his De Veritate Religionis Christianae, when he wrote: "There is a good English translation of this book published some years since by Dr. John Clarke."[4]

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1. The Arminian Magazine, 1778, Vol. I, p. 30.
2. The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M., ed. J. Telford (London, 1931, reprinted 1960), Vol. II, p. 316. (Infra referred to as Letters).
3. Journal, Vol. II, p. 473.
4. Letters, Vol. VI, p. 285.

From this one is entitled to conclude that while Wesley was not uninformed as to the writings and notions of Arminius and the Remonstrants, he did not have to rely on them for arguments to impress or convince his countrymen. His own "evangelical Arminianism" was not so much the result of Arminian literature but was intimately connected with his "evangelical" approach. He never deliberately constructed a scheme of Arminian doctrine, but he came to such views in his ardour for proclaiming the gospel of love to everyone in the world. Doctrine was not his main or prime concern, but personal religion was. Only when he was convinced that dogmatical beliefs were impeding the progress of the gospel did he attack. This attitude he expressed in these words: "We are not to fight against notions, but sins."[1]

His Theological Beliefs.

Reverting to the quotation of Wesley's "evangelical Arminianism as opposed in many points to a rigid Calvinism", a few remarks should be made regarding Wesley's Arminianism as a reaction against strict Calvinism. The following will briefly illustrate his views:

(a) Conditional Election

The problem of the divine eternal decrees became a source of concern for Wesley as early as 1725. In a letter dated 28th May, 1725, he wrote to his mother: "I can't think that when God sent us into the

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1. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 110.

world he had irreversibly decreed that we should be perpetually miserable in it."[1] Two months later he raised the problem again in a letter to his mother, saying,

> What then, shall I say of Predestination? An everlasting purpose of God to deliver some from damnation does, I suppose, exclude all from that deliverance who are not chosen. And if it was inevitably decreed from eternity that such a determinate part of mankind should be saved, and none beside them, a vast majority of the world were born to eternal death without so much as a possibility of avoiding it. How is this consistent with either the Divine Justice or Mercy? 2

In the same letter he wrestled with the problems of man as a free agent. In the latter case it would lead, according to Wesley, to the conclusion of God as the author of sin. His own opinion he phrased as follows:

> I used to think that the difficulty of Predestination might be solved by supposing that it was indeed decreed that a remnant should be elected but that it was in man's power to be of that remnant, But the words of our Article will not bear that sense. I see no other way but to allow that some may be saved who were not always of the number of the elected. 3

From this it becomes more and more apparent that Wesley was beginning to doubt the Calvinist doctrine of a predetermined numerus clausus. It was presumably against this view of the prearranged lot of the elect and reprobate that Wesley felt himself urged "to speak strongly and explicitly on predestination" on 26th April, 1739.[4] A few days later he again spoke on this subject and "declared openly for

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1. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 16.
2. Ibid., p. 22.
3. Ibid., p. 23.
4. Ibid., p. 303.

the first hour against the 'horrible decree' before about four thousand persons . . . "[1] That these polemic speeches were exceptions and that he was not in the habit of attacking doctrine, is testified by Wesley when he wrote, "Generally I speak on faith, remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost."[2]

For Wesley the doctrine of predestination was not an essential one. Writing to George Whiltefield on 9th August, 1740, he showed his moderation when he said:

> There are bigots both for Predestination and against it. God is sending a message to both on either side. But neither will receive it, unless from one of his own opinion. Therefore, for a time you are suffered to be of one opinion and I of another. 3

Wesley did not consider the opinion either of him or of Whitefield to be in opposition to the Confession of Faith. He believed that the 17th Article of the Thirty-nine Articles was capable of a twofold interpretation. From this point of view he could write in 1745: "As to the Seventeenth Article, Mr. Whitefield really believes that it asserts absolute predestination, therefore, I can also subscribe to it with sincerity."[4] This does not mean that Wesley accepted absolute predestination, but he was of the opinion that the 17th Article was ambiguously phrased on purpose so as to allow more than one inter-

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1. Ibid., p. 304.
2. Ibid., p. 308.
3. Ibid., p. 351.
4. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 58.

pretation. How it was possible that both he and Whitefield, despite their diverging opinions on predestination, could subscribe the seventeenth Article he explained in a letter dated 25th June, 1746, and said, "Each of us can truly say, 'I subscribe this Article in that which I believe from my heart is its plain grammatical meaning'."[1]

Even more than twenty-five years after Wesley's first letter touching the question of predestination, he was not yet clear and settled in his own mind as to what attitude to adopt. Writing to his brother, Charles, following the accusation of some of the lay-preachers that the views of Charles were in agreement with those of Whitefield on predestination, he reminded Charles that both of them had often granted "an absolute, unconditional election of some together with a conditional election of all men." On these views Wesley began to cast doubts because, he said, "all the texts which I used to think supported it, I now think prove either more or less - either absolute reprobation and election, or neither."[2]

After a new outburst of verbal hostilities between Calvinists and Arminians, Wesley in a letter to the editor of "LLoyds Evening Post" on 26th February, 1771, caricatured "the inchangeable election of sinners" in such a way that "a fiftieth part of mankind shall be saved, do what they will; and the other forty-nine parts shall be damned, do what they can."[3] During these years a more uncompromising attitude

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1. Ibid., p..70.
2. Ibid., Vol. III, p. 96.
3. Ibid., Vol. V, p. 225.

towards predestination became visible in Wesley's writings. In 1765 he was still maintaining that holding the opinion of particular election and final perseverance was "compatible with a love to Christ and a work of Grace,"[1] but in 1773, he referred to Lady Huntingdon's preachers as men who were "wholly swallowed up in that detestable doctrine of Predestination . . . "[2]

Reviewing Wesley's attitude towards the doctrine of predestination, one must conclude that it was very one-sided. He, like his brother Charles, only stressed the negative side of predestination, i.e. always drawing attention to the terrible fate of the reprobate and neglecting to mention the joy of being elected to glory. Charles expressed this vividly in one of his verses:

> Whoe'er admits, my soul disowns
> The image of a torturing God
> Well-pleased with human shrieks and groans
> A fiend, a Moloch gorged with blood.
>
> Good God! that any child of thine
> So horribly should think of Thee!
> Lo! all my hopes I here resign
> If all may not find grace with me. 3

The same passionate horror is worded in another verse also directed against the decree of reprobation:

> God forbid that I should dare
> To charge my death to Thee

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1. 1. Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 29.
2. Ibid., Vol. VI, p. 51.
3. J.E. Rattenbury, The Evangelical Doctrine of Charles Wesley's Hymns (London, 1941), p. 117.

No, Thy truth and mercy tear
The Horrible Decree. 1

John Wesley stated the crucial difference between Calvinist and Arminian in this question and answer: "Is Predestination absolute or conditional? The Arminians believe it is conditional, the Calvinists that it is absolute."[2] That Wesley considered himself to be an Arminian, is open to no dispute. Not only did he openly proclaim this by the title of his publication, The Arminian Magazine, but on 9th December, 1778, he wrote: "Fire and water cannot dwell together, nor warm Calvinists and Arminians. Let us help them and love them all we can. But the less intercourse our people have with them the better."[3] As Wesley never considered himself "a warm Calvinist," it is clear on whose side he saw himself. Ten years later he described Calvinism as "the very antidote to Methodism and the most dreadly and successful enemy it ever had."[4]

One can endorse the observation that Wesley's sympathy with the Arminian notion of predestination sprang from his conviction that "a solution of the mystery of election was to be sought, not exclusively in God, but to a degree in man," but it is also true that "carried far enough, it makes something in man a factor in election and becomes to that degree synergistic".[5]

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1. Ibid., p. 119.
2. Works, Vol. X, p. 359.
3. Letters, Vol. VI, p. 331.
4. Ibid., Vol. VIII, p. 95.
5. W.D. Allbeck, "Plenteous Grace with Thee is found," Religion in Life, Vol. XXIX, Autumn 1960, p. 505.

(b) General Atonement.

John Wesley's aversion to unconditional predestination and his rejection of the "horrible decree" were ways of expressing his universalism in the sense of a general atonement. By this Wesley did not mean universal salvation. He was very definitely opposed to such a notion. Referring to the Moravian Brethren he said: "I am still afraid their whole church is tainted with Quietism, Universal Salvation and Antinomianism."[1] A year later, in 1746, he felt himself compelled to point out again that "they hold Universal Salvation", a view of which he did not approve.[2] Many years after this, in 1771, he found that at least one of his preachers was using erroneous terms, and he admonished him to "abstain from speaking of Universal Salvation."[3]

While rejecting universal salvation, Wesley firmly and fervently believed in a general atonement by which he understood that by divine decree Christ had died for all men, and that by faith in Christ all could become possessed of that salvation prepared for them. Writing in 1745, John Wesley admitted that he and Charles held "the doctrine of Universal Redemption", but denied that it was "popery".[4]

Charles worded these beliefs of him and his brother as follows:

Thy undistinguishing regard
Was cast on Adam's fallen race;

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1. Letters, Vol. II, p. 178.
2. Ibid., p. 219.
3. Ibid., p. 228.
4. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 198.

> For all thou hast in Christ prepared
> Sufficient, sovereign, saving grace. 1

The songs of Charles accompanied John's sermons, and both expressed their firm conviction of the unlimited scope of Christ's atonement. In 1751 John Wesley, contrasting his own teaching with that of George Whitefield, wrote, "Whitefield preached particular and I universal redemption".[2] Discussing his plan and purpose for a regular publication to express the Methodist point of view, Wesley said, "I mean a magazine purposely wrote to defend Universal Redemption."[3] The first number of The Arminian Magazine having appeared fourteen days earlier, John Wesley commented on it on 15th January, 1778:

> This magazine not only contains no railing but (properly speaking) no controversy. It proves one point: 'God willeth all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.' It goes straight forward, taking notice of no opponent, but invariably pursuing this one point. 4

John Wesley, filled with the sense of the love and mercy of God, and with genuine concern for the spiritual well-being of men, could not accede to the views of particular redemption for the elect only. This belief of John Wesley was exactly the same as that expressed in the second Article of the Five Articles of the Remonstrants, but he did not arrive at this via the writings of the Arminians. Wesley was brought up in a home where a strong belief in the universal offer of salvation was cherished. It was in particular the powerful influence

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1. Rattenbury, op. cit., p. 134.
2. Letters, Vol. III, p. 313.
3. Ibid., Vol. VI, p. 284.
4. Ibid., p. 295.

of his mother, Susanna, which had guided him to resist absolute predestination and particular redemption.[1] The writings of the Arminians, both Dutch and English, furthered and perpetuated these beliefs.

(c) Salvation by Grace.

There is no reason to doubt that Wesley did not believe that man was able to do anything towards his own salvation.[2] Of nothing was he more convinced than that God converted sinners by "suddenly inspiring them with an immediate testimony of his love, easily distinguished from fancy."[3] He was in no doubt whatsoever that faith, hope, and love were not natural human attributes but were wrought in man by the Spirit of God.[4] What Wesley saw as essential in the salvation of man was "the operation of the Spirit of God . . . which raises the dead and which calls the things which are not as though they were".[5]

Wesley understood salvation as centring upon the unmerited grace of God whereby man is justified and forgiven. This is why he felt he could say, "I think on Justification . . . just as Mr. Calvin does. In this respect I do not differ from him an hair's breadth."[6] Yet the difference between Wesley and Calvin was more than a hair's breadth. This was pointed out in the following way:

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1. Schmidt, op. cit., pp. 87-89.
2. Compare Works, Vol. VIII, pp. 5-6.
3. Letters, Vol. II, p. 61.
4. Ibid., pp. 61, 71.
5. Ibid., p. 71.
6. Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 298.

> If the faith whereby grace is appropriated is the gift of God, there is no logical way to avoid either a grace wrought universal salvation or else the unconditional election of some to salvation and others to reprobation. Wesley would have neither . . . He had in fact to make room, however 'small' for man to cast the deciding vote in the matter of his eternal destiny. That was the root of his Arminianism. 1

Wesley would not press the point much further of how he conceived of man's participation in obtaining salvation. In his sermon "Free Grace" he stressed the grace "free for all" and working "free in all", enabling men dead in sin to answer God's call.[2] He rejected the Calvinistic doctrine of particular redemption because, as the issue was put, "Methodism was based upon a relation between man and God which is personal and gracious, in which religious dependence upon God in no way minimizes the moral independence of man."[3] This doctrine of gracious ability held by Wesley implied that no man could be justified without consciously participating in it, therefore, he denied the assertion that "a man may be justified and not know it."[4]

From these considerations it can be concluded that while Wesley held firmly to the belief that salvation was from God, his doctrine of salvation gave man a share, however small, in shaping his own destiny. But one cannot be more in agreement with the following statement on Wesley's "synergism":

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1. P.S. Sanders, "Is there a Neo-Wesleyanism", Religion in Life, Vol. XXIX, Autumn, 1960, p. 495.
2. Works, Vol. VII, pp. 373-374.
3. S.G. Dimond, The Psychology of the Methodist Revival: An Empirical and Descriptive Study (London, 1926), p. 240.
4. Letters, Vol. III, p. 101.

> It was a far cry, nevertheless, from the contemporary forms of humanism, whether Deism, Anglican latitudinarianism or Dissenting Arianism. Wesley attributed man's ability to respond to God's offer not to natural free will but to prevenient grace. 1

(d) Conditional Perseverance.

Only two quotations will suffice to illustrate Wesley's denial of the Calvinistic doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. In a letter to Whitefield on 28th May, 1753, Wesley remarked that several of the Methodist preachers had complained about Whitefield's preaching of "opinions which we do not believe to be true". One of the opinions against which exception was taken was that "there is no possibility of falling away from grace."[2]

Nearly at the end of his life, Wesley was still clinging to the sincere belief that a Christian should constantly and consciously press on towards the goal and not allow himself to rest passively on faith.[3] He could not have put it in a clearer way than when he wrote in 1789, commencing on a sarcastic note:

> You see my dear Harriet, the blessed effects of Unconditional Perseverance! It leads the way by easy steps first to presumption and then to black despair. There will be no way to recover your poor friend to a scriptural faith but by taking away that broken reed from her, and by convincing her that if she dies in her present state, she will perish eternally . . . What a blessing it is, dear Harriet, that you have been saved

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1. Sanders, op. cit., p. 495. For Wesley on prevenient grace, see C.W. William, John Wesley's Theology Today (London, 1960), pp. 39-46.
2. Letters, Vol. III, p. 101.
3. Williams, op. cit., p. 174, condensed this view as follows: "To faith which is the means for entrance into the Christian life, must be added the works made possible by grace through which perfection is reached".

> from this poisonous doctrine and that you are enabled to follow after that holiness without which we cannot see the Lord! 1

Wesley believed in a doctrine of the perseverance of the saints reconstructed within an ethical framework. It is true that "the 'holiness without which no man shall see the Lord', of which Wesley speaks, is not a holiness that is judged by objective moral standards, but a holiness in terms of unbroken relationship to Christ the Holy One,"[2] but even here, Wesley's conception of the relationship between perseverance and untimate salvation is not free from a certain degree of synergism.

Keeping these theological notions of Wesley in mind, one is fully justified in saying: John Wesley was an Arminian. But to say this implies that his views were more akin to Calvinistic rather than to Lutheran theology. Wesley, like Arminius, was not striving against John Calvin, but against the epigones, the later and lesser lights who went further than Calvin and moulded his theology into a rigid scheme. It is correct to say that Wesley was "almost a Calvinist."[3] In the minutes of the second conference of Wesley's Societies held in 1745, the question is raised: "Wherein may we come to the very edge of Calvinism?" The answer is given,

"(1) In ascribing all good to free grace.

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1. Letters, Vol. VIII, pp. 159-160.
2. Williams, op. cit., p. 175.
3. G.C. Cell, The Rediscovery of John Wesley (New York, 1935), p. 19.

(2) In denying all natural free-will and all power antecedent to grace.

(3) In excluding all merit from man even for what he has or does by the grace of God."[1]

This is not only the edge of Calvinism but is Calvinism itself. Where Wesley differed from Calvin on predestination, the extent of the atonement, the appropriation of grace, and the question of perseverance in faith, he shared the views of Arminius.

While Wesley's theology, seen in its evangelistic context, was in some sense a reaction against rigid dogmatical Calvinism, it was at the same time a reaction against rigid rationalistic Arminianism of his century which rejected predestination altogether and which hailed free-will as the key to the door of salvation. In this two-way reaction Wesley found himself in harmony with the religious principles which Jacobus Arminius shared with historical Calvinism. One can readily endorse the statement that John Wesley may well be called "the most faithful of Arminius's disciples, although, like St. Paul, he did not sit at his master's feet."[2]

The Opposition Encountered.

"To say 'This man is an Arminian' has the same effect on many

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1. Quoted by Cell, op. cit., p. 249.
2. A.H. Pask, "The Influence of Arminius on John Wesley," London Quarterly and Hoborn Review, Vol. 185, October, 1960, p. 262.

hearers as to say 'This is a mad dog," wrote Wesley.[1] George Whitefield must have been aware of this and of the apathy in Scotland against Arminianism when he learned of Wesley's proposed visit to Scotland. He, therefore, voiced strong doubts on the advisability of such steps. Recalling this incident many years later, Wesley wrote:

> When I was first invited into Scotland (about fourteen years ago), Mr. Whitefield told me: 'you have no business there; for your principles are so well known, that if you spoke like an angel none would hear you. And if they did, you would have nothing to do but to dispute with one and another from morning till night'. 2

Whitefield, an avowed Calvinist, felt he had reason to raise a finger of warning, for he knew what it was to encounter opposition on Scottish soil. Whitefield came to Scotland on 30th July, 1741, following an invitation of Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine.[3] During this first visit he was denounced by a minister as "a curate of the Church of England," and as holding views that were "grossly Arminian."[4] In 1742, the year of the much discussed revivals in Scotland in which Whitefield played an important role, Adam Gib, the Anti-Burgher, thought it necessary to warn against Whitefield. He published a sermon, the title-page of which gives an indication of the contents, namely "that Mr. Whitefield is no minister of Jesus Christ; that his call and coming to Scotland is scandalous . . . that his whole doctrine is, and his success must be

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1. Works, Vol. X, p. 358.
2. Letters, Vol. IV, p. 295.
3. D. Butler, John Wesley and George Whitefield in Scotland, (Edinburgh, 1898), pp. 12-18.
4. Ibid., p. 30.

diabolical . . . "[1]

The Associate Presbytery took the same stand as Gib, and in an Act for the renewal of the Covenant passed in 1743, they depicted Whitefield as "a professed member and priest of the superstitious Church of England."[2] They considered it one of the reasons for humiliation and confession of sins that "some of us were not timeously enough aware of Mr. George Whitefield, a priest of the Church of England, and the danger of his way".[3] That Whitefield's status as a minister of the Church of England was the main source of the hostility experienced from the ranks of the Associate Presbytery, is certain. This objection was repeated by Alexander Moncrief when he wrote: "Let it be considered that his mission and ordination flow only from a prelate."[4] Such an ordination Moncrief considered to be unlawful because "prelacy stands in a direct opposition unto the will of God revealed in his Word," and because "God himself has made prelacy a scandalous offence in his own Word."[5]

Wesley was fully aware of the opposition offered by these groups to the ministry of Whitefield in Scotland. He was also acquainted with

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1. A. Gib, A Warning against Countenancing the Ministrations of Mr. George Whitefield . . . (Edinburgh, 1742).
2. Act of the Associate Presbytery for Renewing the National Covenant of Scotland, and the Solemn League and Covenant of the Three Nations (Edinburgh, 1744), p. 109.
3. Ibid., p. 123.
4. A. Moncrief, The Countenancing of Mr. Whitefield's Administration (Glasgow, 1758), p. 3.
5. Ibid., pp. 7-8.

the ecclesiastical history of the land. He read the History of the Reformation of John Knox and Wodrow's History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland.[1] There is also no reason to doubt that he was conscious of the dividing line between his Arminianism and the doctrine of the Scottish Churches. He also knew that Whitefield's questioning the expediency of his plan to visit Scotland was not without good ground. Therefore, Wesley resolved not to preach doctrine which might give rise to disputes and disunity. He answered Whitefield's doubts in this way:

> If God sends me, people will hear. And I will give them no provocation to dispute, for I will studiously avoid controverted points, and keep to the fundamental truths of Christianity. And if any still begin to dispute, they may, but I will not dispute with them. 2

That it was Wesley's desire to steer a safe course between the Scylla and Charybdis of ecclesiastical controversies in Scotland is reaffirmed in a letter dated 24th January, 1771, which reads:

> From the first hours that I entered the kingdom, it was a sacred rule with me never to preach on any controverted point - at least not in a controversial way. 3

What Wesley intended for himself, he also expected from his preachers and he gave them strict orders to adhere to his rule. Writing in 1747 to a preacher, he said, "We are not to fight against notions but sins. Least of all should I advise you once to open your lips

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1. W.F. Gray, "John Wesley and Scotland", R.S.C.H.S., (Glasgow, 1944), Vol. VIII, p. 221.
2. Letters, Vol. IV, p. 295.
3. Ibid., Vol. V, p. 219. Italics in the text of Letters.

against Predestination. It would do more mischief than you are aware of."[1] Making reference to another one of his preachers in Glasgow, Wesley remarked, "He must be lost to all common sense to preach against final perseverance in Scotland."[2]

Despite all the good and praiseworthy intentions of Wesley, he found himself, early in 1765, involved in a theological controversy which seemed to herald the doom of his work in Scotland, a work with a double aim, namely to increase and intensify personal religion, and to gather the new converts into his Methodist Societies. The centre of the dispute was Dr. John Erskine, one of the most popular and influential ministers of Edinburgh. Already in 1762 Wesley had expressed his disappointment at the slow progress of the work in the main city of Scotland, and he wanted to know "what has hindered the increase of the work in Edinburgh."[3] A year later he alluded to a "little misunderstanding at Edinburgh."[4] From this it seems that various factors were impeding the work but it was only in 1765 that the real opposition was encountered.

The immediate cause of the verbal conflict was the respective opinions of Erskine and Wesley on James Hervey's Theron and Aspasio published in 1755. In a lengthy letter to the author, Wesley criticized

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1. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 110.
2. Ibid., Vol. V, p. 219.
3. Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 183.
4. Ibid., p. 222.

some of the propositions therein contained.[1] Hervey defended himself in a reply published posthumously in 1764, entitled Apasio Vindicated in Eleven Letters to Mr. John Wesley. In 1765, Erskine joined the dispute by republishing Apasio Vindicated and contributed a preface consisting largely of a selection of quotations from Wesley's works in order to show that his teaching was grossly hostile to Calvinistic theology, being "a medley of Arminian, Antinomian, and enthusiastic errors" suppressed and dissembled in order to win converts.[2]

Replies and defences from the Methodist side did not remain absent. One of Wesley's preachers, James Kershaw, answered Erskine in An Earnest Appeal to the Public in an Honest, Amicable and Affectionate Reply, published a few weeks after Erskine's edition of Aspasio Vindicated. This resulted in an immediate and bitter attack on Wesley by Erskine in his publication, Mr. Wesley's Principles Detected. Wesley, whose aim was not religious controversies but religious conversions, wrote to Erskine in private on 24th April, 1765,[3] and in 1766 he published his Some Remarks on a Defence of the Preface to the Edinburgh Edition of 'Aspasio Vindicated'. The controversy raved until 1768, during which time a further number of pamphlets by both parties appeared.[4] That this disputation caused harm to Wesley's work and

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1. Ibid., Vol. III, pp. 371-388.
2. Aspasio Vindicated in Eleven Letters from the Late Mr. Hervey to Rev. Mr. John Wesley (Edinburgh, 1765) preface, p. 6.
3. Letters, Vol. IV, pp. 293-296.
4. See. W.F. Swift, Methodism in Scotland (London, 1947), p. 95 for these publications.

influence in Scotland cannot be doubted, but should not be over-estimated. Erskine's opposition made itself felt, and the following observation can be endorsed if made applicable only to Wesley's activities in Edinburgh: "Erskine had done his work too well; like an early morning frost in blossom-time, his propaganda had blighted the promise of the fruit."[1]

In a letter to Rev. W. Plenderlieth, minister of the Church of Scotland in Edinburgh, written on 23rd May, 1768, Wesley reviewed the controversy and restated his opinion on predestination, one of the points of dispute:

> I did attack predestination eight-and-twenty years ago; and I do not believe now any predestination which implies irrespective reprobation. But I do not believe it is necessarily subversive of all religion. I think hot disputes are much more so, therefore, I never willingly dispute with any one about it. And I advise all my friends, not in Scotland only, but all over England and Ireland, to avoid all contention on the head, and let every man remain in his own opinion. 2

Remarking on Erskine's role in the controversy, Wesley said, "I love and reverence him, but not his doctrine."[3]

This seems to have been the identical attitude of Lady Glenorchy towards Wesley when she severed her connections with the Methodists in 1771. Lady Glenorchy had hired a disused Roman Catholic Chapel, named St. Mary's Chapel, and this was opened on 7th March, 1770, for religious meetings to be conducted by Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and one day

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1. Ibid., p. 28.
2. Letters, Vol. V, p. 90.
3. Ibid., p. 91.

in the week by Wesley's preachers.[1] She often went to listen to Wesley and his preachers, but she declined to join their Society.[2] A year after the opening of the chapel, Lady Glenorchy found it necessary to dismiss Wesley's preachers from her chapel. Recording in her diary the reasons for such a drastic step, she wrote:

> Before I left Edinburgh, I dismissed Mr. Wesley's preachers from my chapel, as, from some writings of Mr. Wesley which fell into my hands, and from the sentiments of some of his preachers of late officiating here, I found they held doctrines that appear to be erroneous. First, they deny the doctrines of imputed righteousness, election and the saints' perseverance, which I think are clearly revealed in Scripture. 3

The other two reasons given by her were that the other ministers would not preach in the chapel if the Methodists were to continue to use it, and that she herself did not receive any blessing from the sermons of Wesley's preachers.[4]

Resulting from the theological polemic commenced in 1665, and the withdrawal of Lady Glenorchy's support, Edinburgh Methodism suffered a loss of prestige and had to struggle against sever prejudice for many years to come.

The Achievements Appraised.

The work of Wesley in Scotland was by no means futile and fruitless as statistics might imply. Apart from the opposition in Edinburgh

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1. T.S. Jones, The Life of the Right Honourable Willielma Viscountess Glenorchy (Edinburgh, 1822), pp. 132, 146.
2. Ibid., p. 155.
3. Ibid., p. 239.
4. Ibid.

where Wesley had reason to complain that the ministers of Edinburgh "steeled the hearts of the people against all the good impressions which might otherwise have been made",[1] his labours in Scotland were not hampered by undue resistance or even riots and persecution to which he and his preachers were exposed in England.[2]

In 1763, he wrote:

> Many were formerly of opinion that our preaching would not be received in North Britain, and that we could be of no use there . . . But I have never seen the fields more white than they were from Edinburgh to Aberdeen last summer . . . 3

The following year he reported that "the Word of God has free course in North Britain, even among honourable and right honourable sinners."[4] Two years after the commencement of the Erskine-Wesley conflict, Wesley could still write: "We want more labourers, especially in the North, where one preacher is increased into seven! and the people cry aloud for more!"[5]

Although Wesley was acquainted with disappointments, he never lost faith and optimism regarding the progress in Scotland. Writing in 1779, he sounded this note of optimism, saying, "I trust there will be such a work in Scotland this year as never was seen there yet."[6]

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1. Letters, Vol. V, p. 226.
2. Ibid., Vol. VII, p. 242, Wesley wrote: "You know we may preach anywhere in Scotland without danger of riots."
3. Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 223.
4. Ibid., p. 246.
5. Ibid., Vol. V, p. 51.
6. Ibid., Vol. VI, p. 351.

After his twenty-second visit to Scotland in 1790, which was also his last, he could joyfully write, "I have just now finished my route through Scotland where I never had such congregations before."[1]

Did Scotland live up to the wishes and expectations of the founder of Methodism? At Wesley's death in 1791, forty years after he had first set foot on Scottish soil, there were eight Methodist chapels built (apart from a number of preaching houses bought or hired), sixteen preachers in the whole of Scotland, and 1179 members of his Societies.[2] These figures reveal no overwhelming success but statistics cannot indicate the full extent of the achievement of Wesley and his preachers in Scotland. Scotland had given a willing ear to Wesley and his message, and that Methodism had taken root in many places there, became evident from the rise and growth of the various Societies. Uncounted numbers heard his sermons and took heed, although the majority of them never joined the Societies.

Wesley gained the honour and respect of many. In Glasgow he found a life-long and staunch friend in Dr. John Gillies, one of the ministers of the Church of Scotland.[3] In Edinburgh Dr. Alexander Webster, a close friend of Lady Glenorchy and "an avowed Calvinist of the higher class, but very liberal in his sentiments and conduct to those who differed in opinion from him,"[4] supported the movement of

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1. Ibid., Vol. VIII, pp. 222-223.
2. Swift, op. cit., p. 54.
3. Butler, op. cit., pp. 123-125, 128-131.
4. Jones, op. cit., p. 132.

Wesley.[1] During a friendly discussion "they agreed on all doctrines on which they spoke except those of God's decrees, predestination and the saints' perseverance."[2] In Aberdeen Wesley won the friendship of the University authorities and of some of the prominent ministers.[3] This, undoubtedly, had a favourable effect upon the growth of the Society there which was for many years the one with the largest membership. It was also in Aberdeen that the first Methodist chapel in Scotland was built in the year 1764.[4] In 1772, on his thirteenth visit to Scotland, Wesley was honoured by two Scottish towns which presented him with their freedom and enrolled him as an honorary burgess. These honours, which were public acknowledgements of the high esteem in which Wesley stood, were offered by Perth and Arbroath.[5]

Notwithstanding all that has been said, it cannot be denied that there were serious hindrances to the progress of the work in Scotland. Some of these impediments were

(1) Wesley's Anglican ordination,

(2) His lay-preachers,

(3) The Society Class meetings,

(4) The Wesleyan doctrine.

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1. Butler, op. cit., pp. 164-165.
2. Jones, op. cit., p. 156.
3. Gray, op. cit., pp. 216-217; Swift, op. cit., p. 44.
4. Swift, op. cit., p. 44.
5. L. Tyerman, The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley, M.A., (London, 1878), Vol. III, p. 120.

All of these "novelties" were, to some degree, disagreeable to Scottish custom and belief.

It counted against Whitefield that he was a member and minister of the Church of England which was condemned by many as an apostate church. In presbyterian Scotland where the struggles against prelacy were not yet forgotten, Wesley's mission would undoubtedly have been affected adversely by such an attitude towards the church to which he had pledged life-long allegiance. Wesley's own observation was that the "Scotch bigots" placed the Church of England on the same level with Rome.[1]

A more serious hindrance to progress was Wesley's practice of lay-preachers. At least three disadvantages, as far as Scotland was concerned, were attached to this means of ministry.

(a) They were travelling preachers. On this Wesley was persistent and uncompromising. Writing on 28th August, 1774, he warned, "If the preachers sit still as they have done hitherto, I will send no more of them into Scotland."[2] A few weeks later, he deemed it necessary to state it clearly again: "While I live, itinerant preachers shall be itinerants, I mean, if they choose to remain in connexion with us."[3] There were requests from Scotland to allocate a fixed charge to every preacher, but Wesley was unwavering in his answer: "I have weighed the matter, and will serve the Scots as we do the English, or leave them."[4]

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1. Journal, Vol. IV, p. 123.
2. Letters, Vol. VI, p. 108.
3. Ibid., p. 117.
4. Ibid.

Defending his decision to proceed his work through peripatetic preachers, he wrote on 12th December, 1774:

> It is the Scots only whom, when they like a preacher, would choose to have him continue with him? Not so; but the English and Irish also - yea, all the inhabitants of earth. But we know our calling. The Methodists are not to continue in any one place under heaven. We are called to be itinerants. Those who receive us, must receive us as such. And if the Scots will not, others will. 1

A settled ministry and a fixed pastorate have always been a vital part of Scottish religious life. The travelling preachers of Wesley could never really gain the confidence and affection of the people of Scotland. In this regard the prudence of Wesley persisting in the rigid rule of the itinerancy could well be questioned.

(b) They were unordained preachers. In Scotland the task of preaching was considered the sole prerogative of the ordained minister, and it was near blasphemy to offer the pulpit to an unordained preacher. Accompanying this attitude was the pronounced lack of esteem for the lay-preacher without any higher academic qualifications, with no clerical dress, and no authority to administer the sacraments. In the latter case, the Society's members were compelled to frequent the parish churches to enjoy these privileges with the grave possibility of finding themselves repelled. This antipathy against unofficial and unordained lay-preachers was shared by both the Church of Scotland and the Seceders. In 1798, the Anti-Burgher Synod declared that lay-

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1. Ibid., p. 131.

preaching had no warrant from the Word of God and that none of its members should give any countenance to it.[1] In 1799, the General Assembly went even further and passed an Act against "Vagrant teachers" and "unqualified persons who intrude themselves into the ministry of the Word."[2] Obviously enough, these official decisions were made some years after the death of Wesley; nevertheless, these instances are illustrative of the general attitude in Scotland towards unofficial and unordained preachers. Taking these considerations into account, one is not surprised that lay-preachers did not find enthusiastic approval in Scotland.[3]

(c) They were imposed preachers. The lay-preachers of Wesley were appointed by Wesley himself. The Societies could not exercise any choice or authority, they were not even consulted. The system of patronage was one of the main causes of the Secession in 1733, revealing therewith a wide-spread dissatisfaction with and opposition to a practice preventing the man in the pew from exercising any choice in the call and appointment of a pastor. This limiting or silencing of

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1. A. Fawcett, "Scottish Lay Preachers in the Eighteenth Century", R.S.C.H.S. (Glasgow, 1958), Vol. XII, p. 118.
2. Principal Acts of the General Assembly, 1799, p. 13.
3. "The Men", an unofficial group of evangelical laymen, the origin of whom is connected with the rise of the Fellowship Meetings and Prayer Societies in the Highlands in the middle of the seventeenth century, were the nearest to the itinerant preachers installed by Wesley in the eighteenth century. See J. MacInnes, "The Origin and Early Development of "The Men"", R.S.C.H.S., (Glasgow, 1944), Vol. VIII, pp. 16-41.

the voice of the congregation had undeniably also limited the progress and success of Wesley's work in Scotland.

A third possible reason for the lack of outstanding achievements by Wesley in Scotland, is to be found in his system of class meetings. In Scotland, as in other Calvinistic countries, the predominant emphasis was on preaching resulting in an over-emphasis of the sermon. Deeply and securely fortified in this custom of passive listening, not many Scots would have felt at home in Wesley's class meetings where active "fellowship" and "witnessing" were expected.

These are the factors of both an ecclesiastical nature and those essentially connected with Methodism as an organisation. The fourth consideration offered as a reason for Wesley's limited success in Scotland, is of a doctrinal nature, namely Wesley's Arminianism. Wesley's views were known in Scotland, and they were also expressly classified as Arminian. It has already been pointed out that John Erskine did not hesitate to call John Wesley an "Arminian". Lady Glenorchy, in her diary of 8th March, 1770, noted about her conversation with Mr. — who was deeply prejudiced against Wesley because he was of the conviction that Wesley was "stealing in Arminian doctrines into the country."[1]

It cannot be denied that Wesley's Arminianism was a hindrance to

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1. Jones, op. cit., p. 147.

the progress of his work in Scotland. This he admitted himself when seeking to discover the reason why the awakening had been "almost entirely stayed in Scotland, and in great measure in New England." He admitted that he could make no certain judgment, but one reason he thought could be that "many of them were bigots, immoderately attached either to their own opinions or mode of worship." As far as Scotland was concerned "the Scotch bigots were beyond all others, placing Arminianism (so called) on a level with Deism and the Church of England with that of Rome."[1]

This disadvantage under which he was labouring, should not be exaggerated. In this respect, there is in fact reason to doubt the assertion that "there is no doubt that, to the religious people of Scotland in general, Wesley was a 'heretic'."[2] Apart from the controversies between 1765 and 1768, and Lady Glenorchy's withdrawal of support in 1771 arising from views held by Wesley which would be styled as "heresy" by John Erskine and other of Wesley's outspoken opponents, Wesley's doctrine never assumed the dimensions of "heresy" in the eyes of the general public. It is unthinkable that thousands would flock to listen to a "heretic", that respected ministers of the Church of Scotland would continue to have close relations with a

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1. Journal, Vol. IV, p. 123.
2. G.D. Henderson, "Arminianism in Scotland", London Quarterly Review, October, 1932, p. 500.

"heretic", that hundreds would join the Societies of a "heretic" and that two towns of no mean importance would honour a "heretic" with the freedom of their town. Admittedly the obvious answer to the question of Wesley's moderate success in Calvinistic Scotland would be that his Arminian doctrine did not find congenial surroundings, but such an answer would be too general, not capable of verification, and even incorrect. Wesley's Arminianism was only one of the factors in the complex whole of Methodism which did not meet with general approval in Scotland.

With this a last consideration presents itself, namely, to what extent, if any, Wesley's Arminianism had succeeded in impressing itself on Scotland. The General Associate Synod, reviewing in 1804 the impact of Methodism in Scotland, was very certain that Methodism, and with that Arminianism, had gained some ground in Scotland. This they stated as follows:

> Under the name of Methodists, not a few have embraced the doctrines of the late Mr. Wesley which, beside the absurd notion of the possibility of the saints attaining perfection in the present life, are in general the same with those of the Arminian Scheme. 1

This seems to give an indication that Wesley's a-Calvinistic teaching was not completely unwelcome in Calvinistic Scotland.

The membership statistics of the Societies offer no evidence whatsoever as to whether the members embraced Arminianism or not. It

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1. Narrative and Testimony Agreed Upon and Enacted by the General Associate Synod (Edinburgh, 1804), p. 92.

is hardly conceivable that those who gathered themselves in Wesley's Societies did so because they subscribed to his Arminian views. It is also important to remember that it had always been Wesley's desire to "avoid controverted points and to keep to the fundamental truths of Christianity."[1] With few exceptions, he and his preachers adhered to this intention. Had they explicitly and openly taught conditional election, common redemption, resistibility of grace and the possible fall away of those justified, a sifting process would have taken place - and only then could the adherents and members of the Societies be called "Arminians".

In conclusion it can be asserted that the Wesleyan movement did in fact make itself felt and seen in Scotland. Its evangelical spirit pervaded the churches through the Methodists' writings, labours, religious revivals and the spiritual songs. The message of Wesley and his preachers was sounded even outside the churches where multitudes, alienated from the instituted churches, heard the proclamation of the Word. While the Arminian theology of the Wesleyan movement did not find many an open door in Scotland, Scotland was not unwilling to open the gates for John Wesley and his brother's hymns, for him and his practical zeal for the gospel, for him and his evangelical spirit.

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1. Letters, Vol. IV, p. 295.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

During the last decades of the sixteenth century a spirit of growing dissatisfaction with some of the Calvinistic doctrines began to manifest itself. This movement became apparent in countries such as Switzerland, France, Holland, and England. In Holland the name of Jacobus Arminius came to be associated with this movement. The views of Arminius and his followers stimulated and strengthened a more liberal approach to the Calvinistic doctrinal system, not only in the Netherlands, but also in the other countries mentioned. This approach revealed a greater leniency in the formulation of Calvinistic doctrine, but very often it also assumed the character of a reaction in expressing a-Calvinistic or even anti-Calvinistic views. In the last two instances the designation of Arminianism can, properly speaking, no longer be applied seeing that Arminianism was a movement within the Calvinistic orbit.

In Scotland this theological liberation movement, as it was often conceived of, found its early followers in John Cameron and the Aberdeen school of thought during and after the third decade of the seventeenth century. Their attitude and views were not so much the results of the influence of Arminius and his teachings as they were part of a wider stream of thought expressing discontent with some aspects of Calvinism.

The tenets of Arminius did, however, seep into Scotland from the Netherlands, England, and perhaps even from France. By means of personal contacts and through the writings of Arminius, his exponents, and his epigones, Arminianism entered Scotland. That a number of bishops and ministers were embracing Arminian views before 1638, seems beyond doubt.

The intensity and extent of the impact of Arminian theology in Scotland could in some way be measured by the fierceness and frequency of the replies of the Calvinists. Robert Baillie, Samuel Rutherford, George Gillespie, David Dickson, and James Durham were only a few of the clergymen who felt themselves called to take up the pen against Arminianism. This is a strong proof that they saw in Arminianism a threatening danger, not in far-off Holland, or on the other side of the Tweed, but in Scotland itself. These verbal and written attacks on and defence against Arminianism which continued throughout the period of the Covenanters, showed that the spirit of Arminius was not very far below the surface.

After the Revolution Settlement, Scotland was anew made conscious of Arminianism when two professors, John Strachan and Alexander Munro, were deposed on charges which included the maintaining and preaching of Arminian doctrine. Probably they were incorrectly stigmatized as Arminians although they were undeniably unsympathetic to rigid Calvinism.

The eighteenth century announced the approaching Enlightenment, the first flashes of which became visible in the ideas of James Graham.

He stressed both the Libertas Christiana and the Libertas Philosophica, the latter which, he said, "must be readily allowed to every man in the scrutiny of truth, and quest after human learning."[1] Graham's reason for this demand was that "the wisest, the greatest, the holiest man's authority is no sufficient proof of what is true or false."[2] Although he denied any connection or sympathy with Arminianism, some of his liberal theological views resembled those of the Arminians.

The views of John Simson which excited the Church since 1714, were further expressions of Enlightenment sentiment. His aim was a restating of doctrinal truths within the framework of the Confessions. In this attempt where he relied to a great extent on reason, he did not succeed in confining himself within the bounds of orthodoxy. Simson's views generally breathed the Arminian spirit and some of his statements represented particular aspects of Arminianism. Since the religious component of the Enlightenment was Arminian in quality, it is not surprising that both James Graham and John Simson who came to the verge of the Enlightenment, were inclining to Arminianism.

During the middle of the eighteenth century, the word Arminianism came again into prominence in Scotland by James Fraser's Treatise on Justifying Faith. Fraser stood firmly on orthodox Calvinism except as

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1. The Famous Tryals of the Late Reverend and Learned James Grame (London, 1719), p. 4.
2. Ibid.

far as his views on the extent of the death of Christ was concerned. He held a universal redemption, or as he preferred to term it, a common redemption applicable to all men, as well as a particular redemption applicable only to the elect. Although this view tried to mediate between extreme Calvinism and extreme Arminianism, he was suspected of subscribing to Arminian notions. His treatise caused commotion in both the Reformed Presbytery and in the ranks of the Seceders where certain members construed his views to be Arminianism.

John Wesley, the unwearied travelling minister of the gospel, paid his first visit to Scotland in 1751. Although his theology was undeniably Arminian, he never tried to persuade people to embrace his doctrinal beliefs. His main concern was confronting men with Christ. Only when he felt convinced that certain Calvinistic views were impeding the progress of the Gospel, did he attack Calvinism and defend his own Arminian beliefs. Due to various ecclesiastical, social and doctrinal factors, Wesley and his preachers had to content themselves with moderate success in Scotland. His Arminian views proved to be one of the hindrances on his path in Scotland, but his work and teachings strengthened to some extent the movement of liberal theology in Scotland.

In concluding, the following observations can be made regarding Arminianism in Scotland during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These remarks mainly concern Scotland's disposition towards Arminianism,

and the character of Scotland's Arminianism.

The words "Arminian" and "Arminianism" were familiar in seventeenth and eighteenth century Scotland where they usually conveyed an unfavourable meaning and were often used as words of opprobium. A probable reason why these terms acquired such an emotional charge is that while it was not always properly understood what the Arminians held, it was believed that strong opposition should be given to it, because the venerable Synod of Dort had condemned it. For very many Arminianism was a dreadful word signifying deviation from the Calvinistic doctrines of election and grace, making salvation available to all, attributing man's salvation, partly at least, to man's own desire to use the proper means, and consequently depriving God of his honour and glory.

Another reason for the opposition offered to Arminianism in Scotland is that the major part of Arminian influence came from England at a time when the Church of Scotland was doing its utmost in trying to maintain its identity. Calvinistic doctrine and practices were justly considered as essential components of the Church of Scotland, while a number of members also maintained that presbyterianism belonged to the essence of the Church. The policy of the king and William Laud to unite Scotland and England politically and ecclesiastically was seen as a threat to these ideals. Every move by the sovereign and his ecclesiastical advisers in this respect, Scotland viewed with suspicion.

The theology of Laud which was distinctly Arminian, was seen as dangerous, not so much for what it contained as for what it aimed at. The purpose, as Scotland feared, was to impose English doctrine, liturgy and church government on the Church of Scotland. While Laud favoured both Arminianism and episcopacy, Scotland came to fear both, and in the Scottish mind these two became associated. More than a century later this was still clearly seen in the case of the anti-Arminian George Whitefield, who, because of his connections with the episcopal Church of England, was labelled as an Arminian. Scotland's opposition to the Anglican "innovations" was at the same time a disapproval of Arminianism.

A third reason for the Church of Scotland's aversion to Arminianism was fear of Rome. Popery and Arminianism were often simultaneously mentioned if they were considered as synonyms. If Robert Baillie, who knew more than anybody else what the differences were, mentioned these two in the same breath, how much more was this identification found in the mind of the man in the street and the church-goer in the pew. A considerable part of the church members who were acquainted with the word Arminianism, if they did not identify it with popery, considered it to be the Trojan horse by means of which Roman Catholic principles were smuggled into one of the citadels of Protestantism and Calvinism. For them, resisting Arminianism was at the same time opposing Roman Catholicism.

A fourth reason for Scotland's unfavourable disposition towards Arminianism is simply that they considered Arminianism to be unscriptural. This was amply borne out in the various anti-Arminian writings which appeared from time to time in Scotland, as well as in the speeches before the General Assembly of 1638.

While Scotland's attitude towards Arminianism was generally unfriendly, four groups of theologians can be discerned. These were:

(1) Those who openly attacked Arminianism in a most unsparing and uncompromising way, declaring the same to be completely devoid of any truth, unscriptural, contrary to the Confessions, harmful to men, and a dishonour to God. These were the staunch and fervent defenders of Calvinism who stood squarely on the position of Dort.

(2) The counter-direction was followed by those who openly adhered to, and advocated Arminian tenets. Admittedly this group never assumed important dimensions, but included influential men like William Forbes and some of the bishops and ministers removed by the General Assembly of 1638. John Wesley, although he was no Scot and did not openly preach Arminianism in Scotland, may very well be included in this category.

(3) Another group, while denying that they were Arminians were not willing to condemn everything said or held by the Arminians. These theologians cannot be called traditional and orthodox Calvinists. They exhibited the same spirit of Arminius and his followers in stressing man's worth, in revealing a somewhat apathetic attitude towards doctrine

and creeds, in emphasizing tolerance and moderation, and in appealing to men to concentrate on the fundamental scriptural truths. The Aberdeen Doctors constituted part of this group. In their attempt of mediation and reconciliation, in their emphasis on the ability and duty of man, and in some of their theological expressions, they deviated from the orthodox position to assume a stand not only in agreement with the spirit of Arminius, but sometimes even in accordance with the letter of his beliefs. The effect of this moderate school on Scottish theological climate should not be underrated.

(4) Very close to the third group just mentioned, stood those who thought it necessary to reshape, reconstruct, and restate certain aspects of theological belief. These theologians believed themselves to be Calvinists and their teaching to be in harmony with the Canons of Dort. In their reconstruction of certain doctrines, they were convinced that they were still following the Calvinistic road. This was not always the case; in many instances they were adhering to or inclining to certain Arminian beliefs. Among those who were engaged in the attempt of restating scriptural truths were John Cameron, John Simson, and James Fraser. They all disavowed Arminianism according to the letter and in its logical consequences, but in explaining their own beliefs, they often approached, approximated, and appropriated Arminian terminology and tenets.

These last three groups mentioned above, sounded new notes in Calvinistic Scotland. Since the Synod of Dort, new theological trends

became apparent in Scotland, of which these three formed constituent parts. These trends were part of a wider movement which revealed itself also in other countries, and which may be described as a movement towards freer theological expression and freedom from credal fetters. In Scotland this theological liberation movement became perceptible in Cameron's notions, permeated the thoughts of some of the bishops and ministers, were preeminently found in the Aberdeen school of thought, and persisted throughout the period of the eighteenth century where it joined hands with, and formed an important part of, the Enlightenment.

The theological beliefs which accounted for much of the excitement in Scotland, were the various views on the extent of the atonement. One of the distinctive marks of Arminianism is its universalism. Universalism, in one form or another, has from early times occupied a place in the Church of Scotland. There is a continuous line from John Cameron to James Fraser with interpositions constituted by some bishops and ministers before 1638, some of the Aberdeen Doctors, James Graham and John Simson - all of whom disagreed in one way or another with the belief that Christ had died solely for the elect. Four shades of universalism can be discerned in Scotland during the seventeenth and eighteenth century. These were as follows:

(1) The "universalism"of the Marrow-men: The beliefs of the Marrow-men on the extent of the atonement bordered on universalism in their stating that a warrant was given to all men to receive Christ, although Christ had, in fact, died only for the elect.

(2) Arminian universalism: Arminius and his early followers stressed that Christ had died for all but only the believers would enjoy forgiveness and salvation. In this case, faith is intimately connected with prevenient grace and the willingness to use the means made available. It seems that many of the bishops and ministers deposed by the Assembly of 1638 were supporters of these views. Some of the Aberdeen Doctors and Professor Simson inclined to this type of universalism, while John Wesley was an outspoken adherent to universal atonement.

(3) Pelagian universalism: Another form of universalism also found in Scotland, held that Christ had died for all, and that everyone was able by an act of free-will to accept or reject the salvation offered to all. This means that in the last analysis man is able to decide his eternal destiny. Possibly some of the bishops condemned by the 1638 Assembly were maintaining this kind of universalism.

(4) Hypothetical universalism: This type of universalism which seems to have gained considerable ground in Scotland, maintained that Christ had died for both elect and reprobate, but not in the same way, or not in the same sense. Cameron held that there was a double will in God: conditionally God desired all men to be saved; absolutely God willed only the elect to be saved. Asserting that conditionally God wanted all to be saved, it is implied that Christ died for all and that faith is the condition to salvation. It should be noted, however, that Cameron did not believe that faith was a human quality or man's own

achievement. By maintaining conditional salvation to all, Cameron sided with Arminianism. On the other hand, while maintaining that only the elect would be saved, because only to them saving grace would be granted, Cameron stood definitely on a Calvinistic standpoint. After more than a century, the double reference theory was reintroduced into Scotland by James Fraser's treatise. Like John Cameron he tried to find the golden mean between the extreme positions of Calvinism and Arminianism. He held a universal redemption, or as he would like to term it, a common redemption implying that all men were fundamentally justified in and through Christ. This common redemption and fundamental justification, Fraser stated, did not effect salvation for all, but only the elect partaking in a particular redemption were personally justified. These views of Cameron and Fraser expressing that Christ had in some sense also died for the reprobate, found sympathetic reception in Scotland.

Although only the second of these four views listed above could properly be termed Arminianism, the other three were at least a divergence from the strict Calvinistic assertion that Christ had died for the elect only.

These doctrinal shifts regarding the extent of the atonement inevitably affected the views on predestination. The view usually accompanying universalism was that which Cameron held, i.e. that the salvation of man was foreordained, while the perdition of man was foreknown but not foreordained.

The other Arminian points disputed at Dort, did not appear

conspicuously in Scotland. Cameron expressed the opinion that man was powerless to contribute anything to his own salvation, except his willingness. This was one of the points of criticism raised against him by the Leiden theologians. The condemned bishops, the Aberdeen Doctors, and John Simson stress to a greater or lesser degree the importance of man's diligence in the application of the means to salvation. The last two Arminian articles concerning the resistibility of grace and the possible fall-away of believers, did not cause much stir in Scotland.

Comparing the theological position in Scotland at the end of the eighteenth century with that of 150 or 200 years before, one cannot fail to note a change of theological climate. The character and extent of the change cannot precisely be defined. It is true that formally and officially Scotland's presbyterian churches were still in harmony with the Westminster Confession. In confessional theology no change was to be observed, but in living theological thought a process of reconstruction, modification, and liberalization was taking place. In this process of toning down the seemingly harsher notes of Calvinism, the influences of Arminianism and the Enlightenment played a role. The growth of universalist tendencies and the depreciation of Calvinistic doctrine continued during the nineteenth century. This decline of Calvinism became apparent from the heresy trials conducted during the first half of that century.

A theologian writing during the last decade of the nineteenth

century, commented on the theological position in Scotland and said, "Calvinism is in many cases so toned down as to lose its special characteristics. Its distinctive doctrines do not, if we may judge from published sermons, figure prominently in the modern Scottish pulpit."[1] About forty years later another scholar asserted, "One can no longer say that Scotland is whole-heartedly Calvinist."[2] These two statements could just as well apply to the state of Scotland at the end of the eighteenth century, seeing that the trends and theologians of the nineteenth century only accelerated and intensified the processes and currents of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The statement of a Scottish historian that "one cannot say that Arminianism has ousted Calvinism"[3] is at the same time an acknowledgement of the success of Arminianism in Scotland.

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1. Milroy, op. cit., p. 296.
2. G.D. Henderson, "Arminianism in Scotland", London Quarterly Review, October, 1932, p. 504.
3. Ibid.

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